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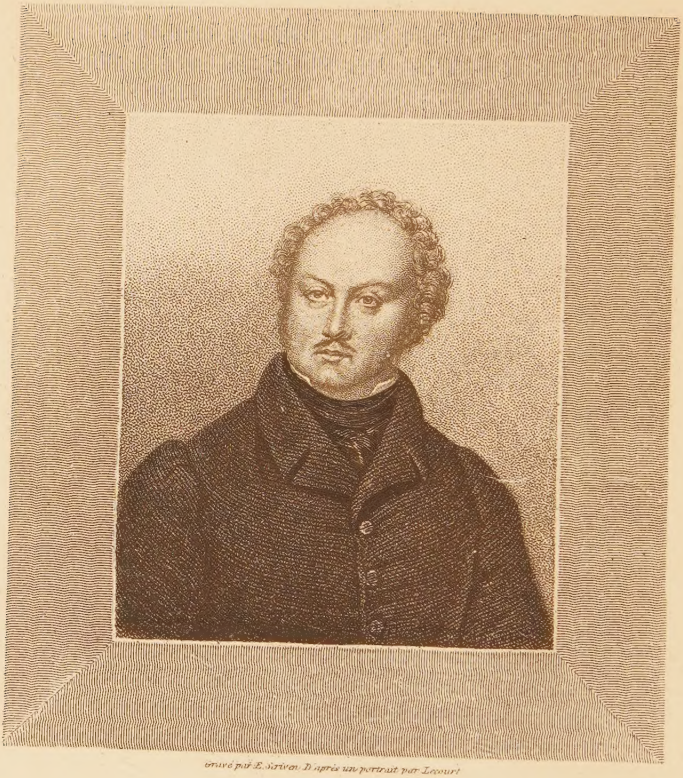
THE LAST LEGITIMATE KING OF FRANCE



gravé par E. Sirivon. D'après un portrait par Lecourt

Charles Louis

Duc de Normandie

THE LAST LEGITIMATE KING OF FRANCE
LOUIS XVII

BY

PHOEBE ALLEN

"Tous les morts ne sont pas au tombeau"

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To

MONSIEUR FOULON DE VAULX

(*HENRI PROVINS*)

To whose kindness and courtesy in allowing me the use of his valuable works I am greatly indebted for the compilation of this book

Our grateful thanks are due to M. Otto Friedrichs for his courtesy in allowing us to make use of the illustrations which appear in this book, and which are contained in M. Friedrichs' interesting work, "Correspondance Intime et Inédite de Louis XVII." We also wish to thank M. Daragon for his co-operation in the matter.

PREFACE

"To the Grandsons of those who inscribed in the Portfolios of 1789, the following consoling and Christian words,

LIBERTY—EQUALITY—FRATERNITY

we dedicate this book, as an appeal to the good sense and justice of the French citizens and as an earnest protest against the greatest crime that has ever found a place in our National History!"

It is with these words that M. Provins dedicates his powerful work entitled *The Last Legitimate King of France*, whose claims to a true though disputed existence he vigorously and logically maintains.

Most of his friends know M. Foulon de Vaulx under his literary name of Henri Provins, under which pseudonym he has published, in addition to the work mentioned above, several other most valuable books and articles which he has most kindly put at my disposal for the compilation of the present work.

Under his own name, M. Foulon de Vaulx has been political adviser to Charles XI., and in this capacity has earned unstinted approbation and praise from the leading members of the "Survivance" party. His retirement from all active share in the present proceedings is therefore considered as little short of a calamity by the friends of the Bourbon cause.

It was in the month of September 1870 that M. Foulon first became interested in the much vexed question of Louis XVII.'s identity. After reading De Beauchesne's work on

the *Child of the Temple* he had been forcibly struck by its very romantic style, which was much more suggestive of fiction than history.

Writing to his friend M. de Thiers in Belgium—he was proprietor of one of the leading newspapers in that country —M. Foulon de Vaulx expressed his views on that point.

(There is no doubt that foreigners are far better posted than the French in the facts of Louis XVII.'s survival.)

M. de Thiers, who was very intimate with Louis XVII.'s faithful friend and legal adviser M. Gruau de la Barre, instantly put the latter into communication with M. Foulon, who forthwith entered into correspondence with the Bourbon family.

At that date all the members were living in Holland.

In the autumn of 1871 he became personally acquainted with Princess Amélie, the eldest daughter of Louis XVII., who then came to Paris accompanied by M. Gruau de la Barre, who was still acting as "Avocat conseil"—advisory counsel—to the children of Louis XVII.

M. Foulon at once volunteered his services in the forthcoming petition which was being drawn up by MM. Gruau and Jules Favre *re* the verdict delivered by the Tribunal of 1851 on the occasion of the first appeal made by the descendants of Louis XVII. for the restitution of their rights.

When three years later, the Court of Appeal in Paris pronounced its decision, Princess Amélie returned to Holland, and consequently it was not until 1883 that relations between the Bourbon family and M. Foulon de Vaulx were finally established.

The death of the Comte de Chambord strengthened the connection. Then it was that Prince Louis-Charles de Bourbon, the head of the family, constituted M. Foulon his representative in Paris, a post he retained till the Prince's death in 1899.

Meanwhile Princess Amélie had returned to live in France, bringing with her her three nephews, the orphaned sons of her brother Prince Edmond.

These youths being in the direct Bourbon line of succession, their aunt was determined that they should receive a thoroughly French education. In these endeavours she was substantially seconded by her generous friends Madame Auvynet de Fontenelle and M. Foulon de Vaulx until her own death in 1891.

Then feeling that her end was approaching, the Princess wrote the following letter to M. Foulon :—

"DEAR AND NOBLE FRIEND,—May GOD preserve your health ! For you are the life and soul of the Cause for which I have suffered all my life. And you will see it triumph ! Rest assured that I shall not cease my prayers for you in Heaven and be of good cheer !

Herewith I bequeath these poor boys to your care.

There is no doubt that they are the sons of my brother Edmond.

Yours cordially and gratefully, AMÉLIE.

December 17th, 1891."

Rather less than eight years later, M. Foulon received another letter commending these youths to his care.

It was from Prince Louis-Charles, dated September 15th, 1899.

This letter, which is an additional proof of the Prince's deep affection for his faithful friend, ran as follows :—

"DEAR AND NOBLE FRIEND,—On her deathbed, my lamented sister commended our brother Edmond's children to your care as being the most loyal of friends, and now that my own end is probably at hand, I renew her entreaties that you will watch over them. Their present surroundings are not what I could wish for them.[1]

"I implore you therefore to keep a watch upon my nephews, for I know that you are not one to shrink from trouble or to be deterred from incurring responsibility by

[1] After their aunt's death they had been removed from the wholesome influence of their friends in Paris. The eldest, Auguste-Jean, married Mlle. Cuille. His one son, Charles-Louis, will be the future representative of the Bourbon family in succession to his father.

the fear of experiencing ingratitude. Serve my nephews as though you were serving my beloved father, Louis XVII., and my unhappy grandparents. They, at any rate, will shower their blessings upon you, even as I do now."

The close of the Prince's earthly pilgrimage was even nearer than he believed when he wrote the above letter.

He had less than three months to live.

In the article contributed by M. Foulon de Vaulx to the January No. 1900 of *La Légitimité*, we find a pathetic account of Charles-Louis de Bourbon's last days of torturing agony, borne with all the dignity of a king, all the patience of a Christian hero.

The Prince had been ailing for some time previous to his death, but it was only within the last eight months of his life that he had realised the cause of his sufferings, namely a growth in the throat. After the fatal nature of the disease had once been fully recognised, its progress was steady and relentless. The patient's difficulty in swallowing food, his distressing struggles for breath were so painful to witness, that when M. Foulon de Vaulx paid his usual half-yearly visit to Prince Charles-Louis at his residence at Teteringen on October 10th, 1899, he was startled at the change in his royal friend, so feeble had he become both physically and mentally.

"During our short stroll together in the park," says M. Foulon, "I was shocked to note how the Prince stopped at nearly every step, suffocating for want of breath and almost fainting with the agony he was enduring.

"At dinner, the Prince required more time to swallow a few spoonfuls of thin soup than most people would take to consume a large meal. I observed also that his utterance had become very thick and his memory was occasionally at fault."

It was evident that the end could not be far off.

And when the moment came for M. Foulon's departure, it became clear that the royal sufferer was fully aware of his state.

For though disguising his own feelings, M. Foulon spoke cheerfully of returning in the spring to visit the Prince as usual, the latter's only reply was a burst of weeping as he embraced his faithful friend with the painfully articulated words, "Good-bye, good-bye, thank you, thank you."

He had barely seven weeks longer to live, but during that time, Charles-Louis de Bourbon bore himself like a hero, with never a murmur, never a complaint, even when suffering from the sharpest throes of his mortal anguish.

His last months were cheered by the presence of Prince Louis, the youngest of his three nephews, to all of whom he was deeply attached. Prince Louis remained at Teteringen till the end came. The attendants on that royal deathbed were pathetically few, yet infinitely devoted.

Besides the young Prince, there was Mlle. Thomas, who for six years had been the nurse-companion to the aged Duchess of Normandy,[1] and who had promised to serve Charles-Louis with the same fidelity. The other was the Prince's housekeeper, a leal heart who generously shared in all Mlle. Thomas's loving service.

This little trio of helpers was reinforced by the good Curé, the Abbé Broeders, who was a constant and welcome visitor to the sick-room. To the last, Charles-Louis struggled to keep about, trying bravely to maintain his usual habits and to continue his ordinary routine. For many years he had been devoted to wood-carving, in which he excelled, and almost to the last he forced himself to work upon a panel for a cupboard, which he was carving for a friend.

But the day came when the dying Prince was forced to own that his hand had lost its cunning.

"I shall never finish this panel now," he said sorrowfully, laying down his tools, "but I shall do better work than this in Heaven." On the night of All Saints' day, his suffering

[1] She died on June 8th, 1888, exactly ninety-three years after that 8th of June, 1795, which represented the date of Louis XVII.'s civil death. An odd coincidence, surely.

became more acute and from that time the end seemed imminent.

On November 17th he made a supreme effort to get up for a few hours in order to receive his niece, Princess Cornélie de Bourbon, who came to see him. That was the last time he left his bed.

But even when his agony became almost unbearable, his unselfish care for others never relaxed.

(Surely here we trace a strong similarity between him and his father Louis XVII., who was the soul of *selflessness*.)

Having made his peace with God—for years the Prince had led the life of a devout Catholic—and freely confessed his forgiveness of his many enemies, Charles-Louis proceeded to give instructions as to the legal formalities to be observed in connection with his death.

On November 19th he inquired what day of the week it was. On being told it was Sunday, he said, "I have always wished to die on a Sunday, but I am still too strong to go to-day"; adding immediately afterwards, "M. Foulon de Vaulx will see to all that is necessary. I particularly desire that the Lily banner, 'le drapeau de Fleurs de lys de la Survivance,' shall be used as my pall, just as it covered my mother's coffin at her funeral. Foulon must keep it afterwards, and if he already possesses a banner, he must give it away to the Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre."

On the night of November 25th, he made distressing efforts to thank Mlle. Thomas for all she had done for him, pressing her hand feebly with a scarcely audible "merci."

On the following Sunday afternoon at three o'clock his last wish was fulfilled, and the spirit of Charles-Louis de Bourbon returned to the GOD Who gave it.

Thus it came to pass that when M. Foulon returned to the familiar house amongst the hills of Ginneken, it was to stand beside the unclosed coffin of his beloved friend and to look his last upon the still face of the last son of Louis XVII.

They had placed a large Cross which he had clasped in death upon the Prince's breast, and had put a medal of the Sacré-Cœur about his neck, encircling his folded hands with a rosary which had been blessed at Lourdes.

According to the local custom, the neighbours gathered together in the darkened chamber to offer prayers for the dead, and at the funeral, crowds filled the Church of Teteringen, where the first part of the service took place.

Fewer mourners followed to the distant cemetery at Zeylen, where the Prince was laid to rest beside his mother.

The coffin was covered with the "Lily banner," upon which lay two large wreaths of Parma violets and chrysanthemums.

When the last prayers had been said at the graveside, and before the coffin had been lowered out of sight, M. Foulon de Vaulx delivered a moving and powerful speech.

In glowing words he summarised the history of the father of the deceased, Louis XVII., enumerating all the adverse circumstances which had hampered the unhappy child of the Temple from his infancy, and emphatically asserting his own conviction that the day would dawn when his descendants would come to their own again.

There could be no doubt, he declared, that the Bourbons now resident in Holland were the true lineal descendants of the kings of France. "And their cause," wound up M. Foulon, "has been slowly gaining ground during these last few years, and as time goes on will make better progress still. By degrees the hearts and minds of intelligent people will be won over to our ranks, and increasing numbers will gather under our banner of the Fleurs de Lys!"

And M. Foulon has nobly redeemed his promise to further the cause to the utmost of his power, by collecting the enormous mass of evidence in support of Louis XVII.'s claims to be recognised as the son of Louis XVI. and Marie

Antoinette, and issuing it through the Press in so many convincing publications.

It is from these valuable sources, all of which he has most generously placed entirely at my disposal, that I have endeavoured to compile the present thesis.

PHOEBE ALLEN.

EVELYN HOUSE, RYDE,
August 1911.

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INTRODUCTION

PRACTICALLY following the plan upon which M. Provins has constructed his *Dernier Roi Légitime de la France*, we have divided this work into three Books.

In Book I. we shall collect as far as possible all facts connected with the tragi-comedy enacted within the walls of the Temple prison. Book II. will deal with the principal dramatis personæ who, whether willingly or unwillingly, had each their own part to sustain in the very literal "*Mystery* play," whilst Book III. will contain the history of the martyrdom of a king, Louis XVII., the centre object of all the plots and counterplots connected with the story of the *Child of the Temple*.

For the benefit of the English reader, who might perhaps weary of following M. Provins' arguments in their exquisitely scrupulous minutiæ, we propose to place the chief points upon which he insists in establishing his theory with respect to the identity of Naundorf with Louis XVII. in opposition to the objections with which most historians usually controvert them. They are as follows:—

(*a*) The removal of Louis XVII. from the Temple.

(*b*) The forging of the certificate of his death, which was stated to have taken place in the Tower, June 8th, 1795.

(*c*) The poisoning of the child substituted for the young king.

(*d*) The consequences—usually fatal ones—which invariably pursued every individual from the Duc de Berri to the most insignificant person who might be in any way capable of throwing light upon the vexed question of Louis XVII.'s identity.

As regards the adverse arguments usually raised in opposition to these points, they are briefly :

1*st.*—That history—in all ages and countries—has always furnished analogous instances of impostors who for various reasons and purposes have personated the dead, and that owing to the love of the marvellous inherent in most natures, these impostors have always found a certain number of supporters.

2*ndly.*—That Naundorf was only one of many similar claimants in whom there was no more reason to believe than in any of the others.

3*rdly.*—That the Temple was much too closely guarded and the young king far too important a captive, for his removal to have been possible after the substitution of another child in his place.

4*thly.*—That as the Duchess of Angoulême *did* interview various pseudo-dauphins, she would most certainly have consented to see Naundorf if she had had the slightest grounds for supposing him to be her brother.

5*thly.*—That if Louis XVII. had really effected his escape from the Temple, the facts of his flight and subsequent existence would never have remained shrouded in such impenetrable mystery.

Let us see how M. Provins parries these thrusts.

1*st.*—It is perfectly true, he admits, that history holds many examples of impostors impersonating the dead and in some cases with temporary success. At the same time he urges that it is surely absolutely necessary to establish the death of the individuals so impersonated beyond all possibility of doubt.

Further, he asks why the existence of such impostors must of necessity act as a convincing proof that the man who for fifty years consistently claimed to be the son of Louis XVI. must consequently be an impostor too? Why, because three or four adventurers chose to represent themselves under false colours, must the fifth individual who declared that he had made a miraculous escape from prison be put into the same condemnation?

Moreover, though we do read in history of a false Smerdis and Agrippa, of an impersonated Drusus and Nero, and though later on in the Middle Ages the false Latin Emperor, Baldwin of Flanders, successfully hoodwinked his followers for several months, yet we find that as the world grows older, and consequently wiser and better provided with the means of verifying facts and identifying individuals, these instances of imposition gradually fade from the pages of history. Besides, if there were absolutely no foundation for the belief, why should the idea that Louis XVII. had left the Temple have been originally started? And why should so many adventurers have thought it worth their while to make capital out of the widespread belief in his existence? Surely their many attempts to impersonate him suggest the probability that many people were really well aware that in some remote corner of Europe the unhappy Louis was wearing out his miserable life, denuded of all his rights and shamelessly disowned by his relations, notably his uncles.

(These latter, be it remembered, were never overscrupulous in the methods they adopted for ridding themselves of any or sundry who were likely to prove hindrances to their unworthy aims and ambitions.)

2ndly.—"The Temple," says M. Provins, "was guarded closely enough when the royal family was first imprisoned there, but on the morrow of the King's execution, the supervision was greatly relaxed." Indeed, there is no doubt that, so far as the guard was concerned, the royal captives might successfully have made their escape, had not entirely independent obstacles arisen on the occasion of each attempt to defeat their plans. In support of this statement he quotes from M. de Beauchesne's work on the *Commune de Paris* an entry made on June 18th, 1794 (when the Reign of Terror was at its height), to the effect that the son of one of the common employés of the Temple could go in and out every day by merely presenting a printed card, and that the Citoyenne Simon—no longer an employée herself,

but mother-in-law to the cook—was in the habit of entering and leaving the Temple through the stables ; a habit which was apparently shared by many other folk of her calibre in the neighbourhood. And it is further stated that in order to have a particular door opened it was only necessary to knock on it with a stone—kept handy for the purpose—to secure the immediate attention of Citoyen Piquet, the porter.

Nor was the supervision kept on the chief entrance to the Temple much stricter. For we read how Laurent and other prison officials betook themselves nearly every evening to their Club, and how Gomin, another chief warder, constantly entertained his boon companions in different parts of the Temple.

But even granting that a rigorous surveillance *was* exercised over the prison, it was certainly no stricter than that maintained at Ham or at St. Marguerite's, yet did not Napoleon III. and Bazaine manage to effect their escape from their respective prisons ? "True devotion is gifted with a magic power, whereby miracles may be worked," says De Beauchesne in referring to Louis XVII., and we fully endorse his utterance.

Finally, the whole question of surveillance loses its importance, if we admit the possibility of a private understanding between Barras—who was the supreme dictator at the time of which we treat—and those members of the Commune who were responsible for the internal arrangements of the Temple.

We intend to demonstrate that not only did such a connivance exist, having for its object the removal of Louis XVII. from his prison, but that if at this juncture the supervision of the captives was reorganised and strengthened, it was not in order to keep a stricter watch upon the Dauphin, but really to prevent outsiders from intruding into the Temple and discovering that another child had been substituted in his place.

As regards the *fourth* objection, relating to the Duchess of Angoulême's behaviour, that appears to us quite explicable.

The story of Joseph sold by his brethren is an oft-told tale in the history of men and nations. No doubt her persistent refusal to accede to Naundorf's piteous appeals was due in great measure to strong coercion on the part of her uncles ; nor must we forget that at that time of day she still cherished hopes of herself becoming the mother of a future King of France. Marie-Thérèse Bourbon would not, alas ! have been the first woman to yield to the promptings of that sin by which "the angels fell."

We now come to the *fifth* objection, namely, the lack of definite general information as regards the flight of Louis XVII. and his subsequent life. But no one guilty of the odious crime of forging his death certificate with a view to making capital out of his existence should an opportunity for so doing present itself in the future, *and* at the cost of sacrificing another child's life in his stead, would be likely to publish his evil doings to the world.

Neither Barras nor Fouché, neither Talleyrand nor Decazès, who had each their own ends to gain by this act of deception, would willingly trumpet it abroad, still less Louis XVIII. and Charles X., who benefited even more from the supposed death of their nephew, whose throne each mounted in turn. Naturally they admitted no doubt as to his decease ! With respect to the conflicting accounts of the various children said to have been substituted for the Dauphin, as well as the different statements concerning his death and the identification of his body, we shall have much to say later on.

Here we will limit our remarks to this one, namely, that *no one* was ever able to produce the original certificate either of the death of Louis XVII. or of the place of his burial.

In conclusion, we may add that in treating these questions, we believe that we have searched every document that has any bearings on the scenes in the Temple from the very first moment that the royal family was imprisoned there. We have consulted all the memoirs of that period, we have examined—either as originals or trustworthy copies—all the

registers of that date, and we have diligently read the published works of all contemporary writers dealing with the subject. And with what result? That more emphatically than ever, we affirm that the so-called Naundorf *was Louis XVII. and none other!*

Leaving the princes of Anjou out of the question, his descendants are the only true representatives of that noble dynasty which for nearly one thousand years contributed so greatly to the lustre and grandeur of France.

And yet where are those descendants now?

Disowned by all their kindred, disinherited of all their rights, with only the torturing remembrance of a cruel past to divert them from the bitterness of the present, these rejected offspring of the Child of the Temple are dragging out their miserable existence on the free soil of the Low Countries.

There, in a small and remote village, they are "content through sad necessity" to hide themselves and their sorrows.

A wretched hunted life, extending over half a century, was all that Fate accorded to their unhappy father after his escape from prison.

And that life was doomed to a singularly tragic end.

One week of the most agonised suffering preceded his death, which was clearly due to the result of poisoning.

And the same relentless Nemesis pursues his children.

For do we not know that the sons and partisans of those who despoiled and murdered the last legitimate King of France, still delight to pour scorn on his descendants and heap all kinds of calumny and insults on their stricken heads?

"Hid are the ways of GOD, Who raiseth up one and setteth down another," but surely the tragic story of the vicissitudes of the Child of the Temple furnishes a unique page in the history of kings and kingdoms and cannot fail to appeal to all but the stoniest hearts.

PROLOGUE

It was in the early Spring of 1794 that the saying, that Anarchy, being of the nature of Dragon's teeth, must infallibly prove suicidal, verified itself with regard to blood-sated Paris.

With the execution of the Hébertists, the Revolution did indeed begin the "eating of its own children," a gruesome banquet prolonged until that fateful July day, when Robespierre and sundry of his colleagues followed their countless victims to the guillotine and thus brought the Reign of Terror to its abrupt and wholly unexpected end.

Slowly and fearsomely, the débris of the old aristocratic circles of society crept back to take up the torn threads of their maimed life, and under cover of the wild excitement produced in all classes by this violent reaction in public affairs, the dismembered aristocracy eagerly sought each other and joyfully clasped hands.

And so during that winter of 1795 the salons, which had been fast closed during the three years of the Red Terror, gradually reopened their doors, and friends so tragically parted met again.

And now, as they speculate with some sparks of reviving hope upon the possible future in store for France, whilst they shed their tears over fallen royalty, all loyal eyes turn with one consent to the prison walls of the Temple, behind whose bars one solitary beacon light is surely flickering still.

The name of Louis XVII. is whispered by every tongue, and all thoughts centre on securing his rescue.

And all the time, whilst the fondest hopes are cherished

and the wildest schemes hatched for his release—some prompted by the purest motives of loyalty and compassion, others emanating from less disinterested incentives—the little captive has vanished from the second storey of the Tower, is no longer held in bondage within its walls.

On the very morrow of his "Victory of Thermidor" some six months ago, Barras, the reactionary Barras, stole a march upon the rest of the Paris world and (determined to put the "little Capet" out of the reach of the Jacobin party) took prompt measures for his removal from the Temple.

Thus it came to pass that whilst throughout those eventful winter days, royalists plotted and planned to effect the rescue of their rightful king, the hour of his release had already struck and his prison knew him no more.

Other hands had opened the door of his cage and others' wits had contrived and compassed the flight of the unhappy "Child of the Temple."

BOOK I

THE TRAGI-COMEDY OF THE TEMPLE

"Tous les morts ne sont pas au tombeau"

THE LAST LEGITIMATE KING OF FRANCE

(LOUIS XVII.)

CHAPTER I

Description of the Temple buildings—Arrival of the royal family at the Temple—Arrangements of the interior of the Tower—The Dauphin imprisoned with his father—The Dauphin's story of Joseph Paulin—The Dauphin removed to his mother's custody—Louis XVI. summoned to the bar of the National Convention—His execution—Untrustworthy character of the writings of Eckard, De Beauchesne, Chantelauze, and others—The health and constitution of Louis XVII.—Monsieur—Monsieur's ill-timed proclamation—Louis XVII. acclaimed king in the Provinces—Ill feeling in Paris against the monarchy—Reflections on the execution of Louis XVI.—Various plots set on foot for the rescue of the royal family from the Temple—Tison, the treacherous gaoler—Proceedings of the Convention against the Queen—Appointment of Simon the Cobbler as "Tutor" to Louis XVII.—Removal of Louis XVII. from his mother.

On Monday, August 13th, 1792, the district known in Paris as the "Quartier du Temple" lay bathed in brilliant sunshine.

In its midst rose "L'enclos du Temple"—literally the Temple Enclosure—which consisted of several contiguous buildings, the largest and most important being the Palace of the Grand Prior.[1]

Its principal façade commanded the Rue du Temple and afforded one of three entrances into the large yard, in the

[1] The Temple was originally the property of the Knights Templar, some of the ancient buildings dating from the beginning of the thirteenth century and remaining extant till 1770.

centre of which stood the imposing Tower of the Temple, situated some 200 yards from the Palace.

The Tower was a quadrangular building dating from 1222, with four turrets, its massive stone walls measuring from 7–9 feet in thickness, and facing the garden on two sides.

A miniature building, also foursquare, with two pepper-box *turret-lets*, adjoined the Tower on one side and was known as "la petite Tour."

The remaining buildings were used for various purposes by the Grand Prior's household.[1] There were for instance the house-steward's office, the porter's lodge, and the huge kitchens, where the food was prepared for all the employés in the Temple, the National Guards (later also for the royal family), and lastly there was a regular canteen for the use of the soldiers and various members of the Temple staff.

It was in front of the Palace, just as the sun was sinking on that ill-starred August 13th, that the royal family alighted from Mayor Pieton's coach, which had conveyed them thither from the Hall of the Legislative Assemblée, to be immured as "hostages" in the Tower of the Temple.

Out of that little group of five royalties—Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, their two children, and Princess Elizabeth —three would only recross that threshold to meet their death on the Place de la Revolution, the fourth, Madame Royale, was destined to languish in captivity for more than three weariful years, whilst the Dauphin of France, Charles-Louis Duc de Normandie, would be condemned to an official death within those four walls, by virtue of the false certificate representing him as having succumbed to the ravages of natural disease.

For that that certificate *was* forged and that the Dauphin did *not* die at the time and place set forth therein will be the object of this work to demonstrate.

[1] There existed in France at this time three Grand Priors, the Prior of France, of Aquitaine, and of Champagne. The Duc d'Angoulême, son of the Comte d'Artois, was the then Grand Prior, and was the proprietor of the Palace.

Arrival at the Temple

How his evasion from the Temple became feasible, why his survival has been shrouded in such mystery, and why in the end Louis XVII. died an uncrowned king on alien soil, disowned by all his kindred, are points into which we propose to examine as closely as our space will permit.

To return, however, to the arrival of the royal family in the precincts of the Temple.

After the recent terrible hours which they had passed in the Hall of the Assembly, where they had been forced to listen to the insulting decree suspending all monarchical authority and voting for the convocation of a National Convention, the comparative peace of the Temple surroundings must have been grateful to the unhappy prisoners. For the first few hours after their arrival at the Temple they were lodged in the Palace, whence they were presently removed to the Little Tower.[1]

For the dilapidated condition of the Great Tower—where the royal family were ultimately confined—made it absolutely uninhabitable for the next ten weeks.

The internal arrangements of the Temple Tower have been so often described in detail, that we need only state here that from the end of October till the day of his death the King was imprisoned in the second storey of the Tower, the Dauphin sharing his apartments from October 26th to December 11th, when the child was returned to his mother's custody.

The Queen and the princesses were confined on the third floor immediately above the King's rooms, but separated from them by a stone staircase of eighty-four steps.

All the rooms had false linen ceilings and were divided from each other by papered partitions, whilst the windows were so heavily barred as to exclude in great measure both air and light.[2]

[1] It had been the original intention of the Assembly to confine the royal prisoners in the Palais de Luxembourg, but the Commune insisted on their being transferred to the Great Tower. See M. Provins' *Dernier Roi Légitime*, i. 6.

[2] See M. Provins' detailed account of the furniture, &c., in the room of the Tower, *Dernier Roi Légitime*, i. 6.

On the third floor, sentinels were posted day and night. The basement floor and the first storey were occupied by the household guards. The fourth storey was left empty, but there was a gallery inside the battlements which was sometimes used as a promenade, blinds being placed between each battlement to prevent the royal family from seeing and being seen.

Whilst the Dauphin shared his father's imprisonment, an incident occurred which impressed itself strongly on the child's memory. And he had good reason to remember it in the future.

Owing to the discovery on the part of the authorities that a plot had been hatched amongst certain royalists for the object of removing the King and his little son from the Temple by night, orders were given to place bolts on the inside of the door of the ante-room to the King's apartments, where two guards always slept during the night. This was an effectual way of preventing all chance of the guards being surprised during their sleep. Accordingly two workmen arrived one morning to affix the bolts. In order to do this, it was necessary to make two holes in the wall.

"When the breakfast hour came," said the Dauphin, when he told the story in later years, "one of the workmen hung back and made signs to my father, who was with me in the ante-room, that he wished to approach him. We three then being alone in the room, the man slipped three packets into my father's hand—they proved to be rolls of gold pieces—and evidently wanted to say something, for he was just beginning to speak, when some one called out to him. My father, fearing discovery, quickly dismissed the man, and proceeded to conceal the coins about my person.

"But his fears were evidently groundless, for I remember that some days later he gave me one of those rolls to take to my good aunt. The workman's name was Joseph Paulin. My father gave him a letter to take to his friends outside the Temple. He was so trustworthy that our friends treated

him with the greatest confidence. Later, he had much to do with my removal from the Temple."

Although the Dauphin had been removed from his mother's care, the Committee of Public Safety gave permission for him to spend the afternoon from after dinner—it was served at two o'clock—until five o'clock in the Queen's apartments. He was escorted up and down stairs by a warder, but, being allowed this amount of communication with the princesses, it made it possible for him to convey the money to Madame Elizabeth.

Probably the next event to create a lasting impression on the Dauphin's mind occurred on December 11th, 1792. He was having a writing lesson with his father, when they were interrupted by the entrance of two National Guards, announcing that the child was to be removed immediately to his mother's custody.

No reason was given for this proceeding, but it was not long to seek. That same afternoon the Mayor of Paris, accompanied by Santerre, Commandant of the National Guard, and several officers appeared in the second storey of the Tower to summon Louis Capet to appear before the bar of the National Convention.

From that day until the night of January 20th, 1793, all intercourse was prohibited between the doomed monarch and his family, so that it was not until half-past eight on the last evening of his life that the King was allowed a parting interview with the Queen and his children. On the following morning at nine o'clock, attended by Santerre at the head of a detachment of the National Guards, Louis XVI. went forth from the Temple to die on the Place de la Révolution.

From that moment the little Dauphin began his chequered career as Louis XVII.

From the end of January 1793 till July 3rd of the same year he remained under the Queen's care.

Several writers, notably Eckard, De Beauchesne, Chantelauze, and others have left the most detailed records of what took place in the Temple during those six months.

The extraordinary discrepancies, however, to be found in their statements and the glaring misrepresentations which occur repeatedly in their pages prove how largely they must have drawn upon their imaginations for very many of their facts. Moreover, not content with contradicting each other, we find these trustworthy writers constantly contradicting themselves.

One salient feature is common to them all—namely, the pertinacity with which they insist on the Dauphin's predisposition to tubercular disease from his birth. It is noteworthy how eager they all are to exaggerate the gravity of the smallest ailments from which, like many children, he occasionally suffered. But then all these authors were bent on establishing the child's natural tendency to disease, in order to explain his premature death in the Temple. There is ample evidence to hand, however, to prove that the Dauphin was a remarkably healthy child from his birth, endowed with such a sunny disposition and such high spirits, that in happier days poor Marie Antoinette was wont to declare "il était né gai."[1] His mental abilities were quite above the average, and his memory was considered remarkably good. It is well to remember this, seeing that in later years Naundorf relied greatly on the vivid recollections of his childhood to establish his identity.

Six days after the execution of Louis XVI. the news of his death was conveyed to Monsieur—later Louis XVIII.—who was then a refugee at Hamm, whereupon he saw fit to issue a proclamation addressed to France,[2] as well as to all the foreign courts, under date January 28th, 1793. After expressing his horror at the murder of his beloved brother (whom he had not scrupled to desert in his hour of need), Monsieur proceeds to proclaim that the Dauphin Charles-Louis has now become King of France and Navarre under the style and title of Louis XVII., and that, in accordance with the

[1] Naundorf was remarkable to the end of his life for his happy temperament.

[2] Monsieur addressed his proclamation to Santerre. The public reading of it, however, was forbidden by the indignant members of the Convention.

laws of the Constitution and by his own right of birth, he further proclaims himself to be regent of France during his nephew's minority.

It is difficult to understand at first sight the object of this declaration, the right of Louis XVII. to succeed his father being absolutely incontestable. Moreover, in view of the then disturbed state of France, and considering that the Convention had abolished the monarchy and that the royal family were helpless prisoners in the hands of the Commune, what was to be gained by gratuitously irritating the party in power by publishing this ill-timed proclamation?

Only those who have made an exhaustive study of Monsieur's mean, unscrupulous, cruel nature, and have taken count of his insatiable ambition, which must be gratified at all costs even to the shedding of his own brother's blood, can really understand the motives which prompted him to imperil the lives of the royal captives by taking this step.

Having covertly truckled to his brother's enemies, having basely abandoned that brother to their wicked will, Monsieur was well aware that he had alienated the sympathies of most good royalists, and that the majority of the latter were quite prepared to reject him as regent for the young king.

Hence his indecent haste to vindicate his right to that post, and hence his culpable indifference as to whether or no the safety of the Queen and her children were endangered by this needless proclamation. In the provinces, meanwhile, public feeling had already asserted itself, and Louis XVII. had been proclaimed king at Marseilles, Toulon, Lyons, Bordeaux, and numerous smaller towns. As to loyal La Vendée, that was already up in arms against the Convention, and by the beginning of March, shouts of "Vive Louis XVII." had gone up from more than six hundred of its villages.

Did the echoes of those ringing cheers pierce the thick walls of the Temple Tower and reach the ears of Marie Antoinette?

Undoubtedly they did, and comforted her breaking heart with hopes of a possible release.

For even at that time of day, the unhappy Queen had still to learn the deep gulf that had been cleft during the last years of the monarchy between the nation as represented in Paris and the loyal provincials of France. She had still to realise the people's seething hatred against the whole house of Bourbon, she had still to grasp that the Convention with all its various committees was the all-powerful ruler of Paris, which could coerce and sway the citizens at its will.

But though she might never forgive the murder of Louis XVI., his widowed Queen was slowly beginning to understand that his cruel death might be regarded by some of his disaffected subjects in the light of an expiatory sacrifice. For, from the moment that the Convention had possessed itself of certain documents hidden in an iron safe in the Tuileries, Marie Antoinette had secretly trembled for the retaliation which this discovery might provoke.

For did not those papers contain incriminating evidence of the King's share in certain dealings with foreign powers, declared to be detrimental to the true interests of France?

But what, argued the little king's mother, what had Louis XVII. done to incur the nation's wrath? Surely no one even in that great angry city would lift a hand against the eight-year-old monarch!

And as though to encourage her to yield to these soothing reflections, the severity of the prison regime had been sensibly modified from the very day after the King's execution.

Nor was this all.

At that moment the Queen was surrounded by faithful and devoted servants ready to lay down their lives for her sake.

Even the gaolers, notably Toulan and Lepitre, touched by her sorrow and fascinated by her beauty, were speedily converted into her enthusiastic admirers, so that altogether the conditions of the royal prisoners had considerably improved by the time that the spring of 1793 had fairly set in.

Rumours of the various agitations on foot to secure the restoration of the monarchy reached Marie Antoinette repeatedly from the outside world, so that in the early months of

that year the very air seemed impregnated with plots and plans which were being hatched both far and near for the release of the royal prisoners.

We may not linger over the various attempts to escape from the Temple which were made from time to time by the inmates, most of them so carefully planned and in some instances so nearly accomplished. But it behoves us to make one observation concerning them, namely, that save and except for the one occasion when Simon's unexpected appearance at the Temple at midnight frustrated Baron de Batz's admirably contrived plot,[1] the failure of those attempts was never attributable to the rigorous surveillance exercised by the gaolers and guards.

On the contrary, those failures were invariably due to quite independent circumstances, such as the young king's illness or the Queen's reluctance to be separated from her children, or some sudden hesitation on the prisoners' part to take the decisive step at the right moment.

We emphasise this fact because it supports our theory that the surveillance exercised over the Tower was neither so very close nor so very careful as to preclude all hope or chance of a prisoner achieving his escape.

Meanwhile the Queen's thoughts were not so entirely concentrated on projects for their evasion as to make her neglectful of her children's education. During the King's lifetime, he had devoted himself to the Dauphin's studies, training him to recite passages from Corneille and Racine, and to study geography so thoroughly that at the age of eight, the child drew a map of France, from memory, on which he marked all the departments correctly, showing their divisions and chief cities, as well as defining the course of all the principal rivers.

Sometimes Clery would superintend the Prince's writing exercises, for which the King always selected passages from the classics as copies. But now the education of this remarkably precocious boy fell to Marie Antoinette, and, with

[1] For particulars of this plot, see *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. i. pp. 17–19.

Madame Elizabeth's help, she devoted many hours daily to teaching both royal children.

There is no doubt that Charles-Louis proved a most apt pupil, though we refrain from quoting the many shrewd speeches and witty repartees which abound in Beauchesne's and Eckard's pages, most of which savour too strongly of the writer's imagination.

Besides his mental gifts the Dauphin was possessed of a remarkably good disposition ; he was very affectionate by nature,[1] and singularly obedient, and these qualities Marie Antoinette was careful to develop. The first moral principle which she inculcated into both children was the forgiveness of injuries and the duty of showing leniency to the faults of others and great severity to their own.

The really beautiful last will and testament left by Louis XVI. formed the text of their mother's exhortations, and was a suitable lesson for preparing his son for the trials that awaited him.

In the midst of their fallen fortunes, the strict training which Marie Antoinette had received at Vienna and the old Court of France asserted itself now. She never allowed the boy to forget that he had become King of France in his own right, and despite their prison surroundings she always insisted that so far as possible he should be treated with the deference due to a sovereign.

For instance, he always occupied the place of honour at table, he was always served first, and she frequently reminded him that he would one day fill the throne.

Poor Queen ! she never dreamt how all these well-meant words and deeds would be turned into deadly weapons against her !

For when, at the beginning of the summer, her two faithful gaolers, Lepitre and Toulan, were removed from their

[1] It is remarkable that whereas from his babyhood the Dauphin won all hearts by his sweet disposition, Madame Royale as quite a little girl was conspicuous for her hard, cold disposition, which contrasted so sharply with her brother's nature. "Le petit Dauphin adoré de tous, faisait fureur par sa gentillesse " (see Otto Friedrich's *Brelan d'Adversaires*).

post—their attachment to her cause having been suspected by the authorities—their place was supplied by one Tison, a deputy of the Commune and a friend of the infamous Hébert. Tison had been selected for the express purpose of spying upon the Queen and working her downfall. Accordingly, day by day, he carried lying tales of Marie Antoinette's utterances to her children to the members of the Commune. Of course they heard him gladly, for the moment was a propitious one for the end which Hébert had in view, namely, to stimulate the general animus against the unfortunate "Autrichienne."

A period of sated cruelty had followed upon the King's execution, but now that was wearing out, and the bloodthirsty tigers of the Revolution were clamouring for fresh victims.

Ay! they were even yelling for the next royal sacrifice by name! It was high time, they declared, to retaliate in some way upon the rebels in La Vendée and to meet the manifesto of Fontenay-le-Comte by some startling reprisal.

And so in the last days of June, Robespierre announced that the Queen must be brought to trial, some of his colleagues expressing surprise that Princess Elizabeth was not also included in the citation. They further clamoured for an act to be passed prohibiting "little Capet" from succeeding to his father.

Thus a storm of exceeding fury, which had been carefully engineered at headquarters, suddenly burst over the unsuspecting members of the royal family.

The Jacobins were howling for their expulsion from France or their lifelong imprisonment in some remote dungeon, Marat was brutally urging that the whole line, root and stock, should be wiped out by the guillotine, whilst Tison the fiend was diligently adding fuel to fire with his daily budget of fabricated evidence against the unhappy Queen, whose conversations he swore that he had heard and faithfully repeated.

The disastrous climax was within sight when one Hérault de Sechelles informed the Commune that a conspiracy was on foot in the provinces to establish the young king on the throne, the whole plot having been revealed to him by Luttier,

the Attorney-General for the department of the Seine. It was reached, however, when Cambon, a member of the Committee for Public Safety, informed the Convention at one of its sittings that another conspiracy had been discovered, formed under the generalship of the Comte de Dillon, to effect the kidnapping of the "little Capet" and the appointment of Marie Antoinette as regent!

Feigning the utmost apprehension on receiving this information, the Convention instantly decided on the immediate removal of Louis XVII. from his mother's custody as an imperative measure of precaution. So then and there, Simon the cobbler, a member of the Commune, was appointed to take charge of the young king, and was further decorated with the style and title of "classical tutor" to the royal prisoner. These resolutions having been passed on July 1st, they were announced to the Queen on the 3rd at ten o'clock at night.

Although the child was already in bed and asleep, they snatched him from his pillow and carried him off.

The poignant distress of the cruelly outraged mother has been depicted abundantly elsewhere, but her farewell to her son can never be told too often, so indicative was it of her own inherent selflessness and of the true mother-love for the child, who was, indeed, "all the heaven of heavens" to her.

Surely if ever a soul were adrift upon a sea of anguish, that soul was poor Marie Antoinette's on that terrible July night, yet even at that supreme moment all her agonised care was only for her son, all her thoughts were given only to what concerned his eternal welfare.

She wasted no time on futile attempts at consolation, she uttered no natural pleading that he would remember her; she only spoke one supplicating appeal to her son, which was as pathetic as it was solemn.

"My child!" she prayed as the National Guards tore him ruthlessly from her arms, "my child, remember, whatever may happen, to be always good, always upright!"

These were the last words that Louis XVII. ever heard from his mother's lips.

CHAPTER II

One long look at the little king before he disappears with Simon—Striking similarity of moral characteristics and tastes between the little Dauphin and the adult Louis XVII.—Several anecdotes illustrating the affinity.

POOR little king!

With the setting of the sun on that July evening, all the golden lights and all the rosy tints faded simultaneously from the heaven of his life!

From the moment that he was so ruthlessly torn from his mother's arms, he was doomed to one continuous storm-tossed existence, with never "a windfall of joy" to chase the leaden clouds from his sky! He was barely eight years old, and yet of him it might truly be said that on the evening of that cruel separation from his family—to the members of which he would never be reunited—he was "Like a child called in from play, whose life had had its holiday!" for verily throughout the long years of suffering and privations which lay before him, there would be no more play, no more holiday for the sorrow-stricken Louis XVII.

But before we lose touch with him—as we practically do after he has once been consigned to his solitary imprisonment on the second floor of the Tower—let us take a last look at poor Marie Antoinette's "petit chou d'amour" whilst the impress of her farewell kiss still lingers on the lips that have called her mother to-night for the last time.

And just as we know that, in later years, the early friends of the Dauphin were eager to trace all the points of physical resemblance between the grown-up Naundorf, pleading his own identity, and the little Duc de Normandie of the past, so it is extremely interesting to take note of certain marked features in the child's disposition and tastes, the develop-

ments of which became clearly traceable in the character and conduct of the royal castaway.

Amongst those distinctive qualities which were most remarkable in the child, and which may be said to have found their counterpart in the grown man, were:

His extraordinary affection for his relations, notably for his mother, whom he absolutely adored.

His singularly happy, contented disposition.

A certain natural imperiousness, which, though it never degenerated into arrogance, thanks to the inherent sweetness of his character and his early training, was a very marked feature both in the child Louis XVII. and in the persecuted Naundorf of later life, betraying the latter's kingly descent.

The Dauphin's keen interest in everything connected with military exploits.

His remarkable love of music, as well as his passion for gardening, specially the culture of flowers.

There are many touching stories which we might adduce as evidence of the Dauphin's devotion to his mother, but here we will only quote one, told by the Comte de Reiset.

It refers to those terrible forty-eight hours spent by the royal family in the Hall of the Assembly, previous to their removal to the Temple, of which we have spoken in the foregoing chapter.

"The little Dauphin," De Reiset tells us, "had behaved with exemplary patience and obedience all through the excessive heat and the thirst from which they all suffered during that trying August day in the closely confined quarters in which the royal victims were literally penned.

"When towards nightfall," continues De Reiset, "the little Prince was being taken down the steps to the cells at the Feuilletans, where the royal family were to be shut up for the night, the Dauphin, who had presented the picture of patient endurance all through the day, seemed literally bubbling over with joy and gladness.

[1] The Club of the Feuilletans served as a temporary prison for the royal family.

"'I'll tell you why I'm so happy,' he said to M. d'Aubier, who was carrying him downstairs; 'it's because mother said that if I behaved well all day before those bad men, she would sleep in my room to-night.'"

Do not our hearts ache as we think of the weary years of solitary confinement that lay ahead of the sunny-spirited child of that evening?

The Dauphin's absolute adoration of his "Maman-reine," as he loved to call the Queen, found its echo in the deeply rooted affection which Louis XVII. preserved to the end of his days for the beautiful young mother of his early childhood. Over and over again, in his many letters to his wife and children, he refers most touchingly to his "mère éternellement chère," whilst in writing to the Dauphine his constant allusions to the precepts inculcated in their early education by Marie Antionette prove how deeply his mother's teaching sank into his childish heart.

In a letter to his wife on January 6th, 1835, Louis XVII. says: "I am sending you the portrait of my mother, taken two years before I was born. It is a wonderfully good likeness. Keep it as a most precious relic . . . and when you look at it, think that she was the best of mothers, the most perfect of wives, and yet—so terribly unhappy!"

The singularly happy temperament which characterised the Dauphin as a little child, and which led Marie Antoinette to declare that "he was born merry" ("il était né gai"), was still remarkable in the prematurely old Louis XVII., of whom it was said in advanced middle age that there was a fundamental brightness in his character: "La gaieté est le vrai fond de son caractère."

M. Charles Gaebel, one of his devoted friends at Crossen, declared that M. Naundorf was always in good spirits, and was never seen by any one to shed a tear. There was, so some people affirmed, something that was akin to pride in his unfailing cheerfulness.

"True," adds Gaebel, "I did see him weep on one occasion, but that was only in strict privacy, when he was

moved to pour out his secret griefs to me. Then the floodgates being once open, his tears flowed long and freely. But that only happened once during all the years that our friendship lasted."[1]

Later on, when Louis XVII. was imprisoned in Paris in 1836, M. Juery, one of the few friends who were allowed to visit him, declared, "Whenever I saw the Prince in his cell, he was always in the same good spirits, perfectly serene and never complaining. Even on the day that he left Paris under sentence of banishment from France, his quiet cheerfulness impressed all his surroundings."

"Espère et sois gaie" ("Hope and be cheerful"), he exhorts his wife, writing one of his bright letters, in the midst of the most depressing circumstances.

As regards his inherent love of commanding, we are told that "I will" ("Je veux") was perpetually on the Dauphin's lips.

It is said that directly the first shock of his violent removal from his mother had somewhat abated, the child's first words were, "Je veux savoir qui vous autorise de m'éloigner de ma mère" ("I will know by whose authority you have separated me from my mother").

And we find the "Je veux" of the Dauphin very constantly on the older Louis XVII.'s lips.

"Je veux et j'ordonne" is a phrase which recurs repeatedly in his letters, even when he is actually writing from a prison cell or when he has not a sou to call his own.

As regards the matter of his pursuits and tastes, the Dauphin was most certainly the father to his older self.

With respect to his love and keen interest in all that belonged to soldiers and the art of war, we could quote endless passages from the various records of the Dauphin's childhood. For we repeatedly hear of him rejoicing in the possession of swords and guns—there is no doubt that these were by far his favourite toys—or engaged in reviewing

[1] See *Motifs de Conviction sur l'existence du Duc de Bourbon*, pp. 38, 39.

THE DAUPHIN AT THE AGE OF THREE

LOUIS XVII. AT THE AGE OF EIGHT

his little regiment of playfellows, or—greatest joy of all—firing off his miniature cannons in his garden at the Tuileries.

Madame de Tourzel, his governess, tells us how some one made a present to the Dauphin of a whole little suit of armour modelled exactly on an old knight's accoutrements, to the child's huge delight.

This suit, however, he was never allowed to wear except in the privacy of his own apartments, whereas on July 14th, 1792, on the anniversary of the Federation, the Dauphin appeared in public in the uniform of the National Guard.

On that occasion, the child showed signs of that ready wit which was never lacking in Naundorf.

Returning from the Champs de Mars, and hearing loud shouts of "Down with the King!" and "Long live Péton!" the Dauphin promptly exclaimed, "Oh! I see M. Péton has turned into a king to-day!"

On the occasion of the royal family's flight to Varennes, when it was necessary to wake the Dauphin out of his sleep, directly they told him that he must get up and put on his toy sword, he was instantly awake and alert.

Louis XVII.'s keen interest in all military matters and his clever inventions in the way of warlike missiles is matter of history.

Besides the Dauphin's love of gardening, specially his delight in cultivating flowers, to which we shall have occasion to allude later on, another of his leading tastes was music.

Very early in life, he evinced a perfect passion for music.

On one occasion, when he was quite a tiny child, at St. Cloud, Marie Antoinette was singing a ballad, which so fascinated him that he remained absolutely motionless on his little chair with his eyes closed, so that Madame Elizabeth suggested that he had fallen asleep. Whereupon the Dauphin leapt to his feet.

"Oh! my aunt!" he cried, "how could any one go to sleep whilst mother is singing!"

Under Marie Antoinette's training, he learnt to sing very sweetly himself, and on one occasion when the Queen gave an

audience to the venerable Maréchale de Noailles-Mouly, she bade the little Prince kneel down and chant the simple prayer that she had taught him to say daily for his father.

"Ciel entends la prière
Qu'ici je fais,
Conserve un si bon père
A ses sujets."[1]

Later on, we hear of pathetic scenes in the Temple, where touching songs were sung by the young brother and sister, led by the Queen and accompanied by Madame Elizabeth.

In Naundorf, the love of music was so marked that he seized every opportunity of enjoying it.

During his sojourn in Spandau, there being no Roman Catholic Church in the town, he frequently went to the Protestant place of worship. "But only because I can sing there," he was always careful to say.

Louis XVII. was so determined that his children should be taught music, that even in his most troubled days at Crossen he insisted on his eldest daughter Amélie taking lessons, and throughout his letters to his family he is always urging them not to be content with knowing one instrument only, but to learn to play on several.

"Remember, my son," he writes, "that a man who can only play one instrument is like a man who can only speak one language and who is no better than a sheep. Learn languages in your lesson hours, but for your recreation take up drawing and music, especially the violin and the flute."

So keen is the father on this point, that at the cost of great self-denial he bought a good piano and a beautiful guitar for his elder children, and little accordions for the younger ones.

For Louis XVII. was determined that so far as lay in his power, his sons and daughters should never suffer from the neglected education which was a lifelong grief to himself.

[1] See *Les dernières Années du Règne et de la Vie de Louis XVI.*, p. 270.

"I would have forgiven them all the rest"

Most bitterly did he feel the lack of intellectual culture which was the inevitable result of the cruel life that had been imposed upon him.

"If only my tormentors had not neglected my education, I would have forgiven them all the rest!" he once exclaimed.

No wonder he should find it hard to forgive such an injury!

For it is appalling to think that as the little Dauphin was carried away down those eighty-six stone steps which would cut him off for the future from all intercourse with his family, he was also being carried out of reach of all chances of continuing that education for which he had already shown so much aptitude, into an atmosphere of absolute Godlessness and brutal ignorance.

CHAPTER III

Louis XVII.'s sufferings under Simon's care palpably exaggerated—Madame Simon—Examination into the conditions of Louis XVII.'s imprisonment during Simon's gaolership—Louis XVII.'s love of gardening—His rabbit—Simon procures a musical-box for the little king—Beauchesne's and Eckard's version of the end of that musical-box—Conflicting statements with regard to the billiard-table set up for Louis XVII.'s amusement—Inferences to be drawn from certain extant evidence.

Now the curtain rises upon the unhappy little king transferred from his mother's devoted care to the tender mercies of Simon the cobbler.

He was imprisoned in the same rooms of the second storey of the Tower which his father had formerly occupied. With the beginning of this period of Louis XVII.'s troubled existence, we come to closer quarters with our literary antagonists who insist on his identity with the child who died in the Temple, and who resolutely refuse to recognise Naundorf as the son of Louis XVI.

The reluctance of the world at large to relinquish their belief in the thrillingly pathetic story of the child in the Temple does not altogether surprise us.

Did not its moving details wring the hearts of all readers, old and young, during the greater part of the last century?

The tragic element, either in truth or fiction, always commands attention. Nay! in many cases it imparts the conservative properties of the embalmers' spices, and has ensured the preservation of countless tales and records, which would long ago have passed out of the memory of man, had they held no note of pathos.

Nevertheless this obstinate determination to cling to these palpable errors of such historical importance, in the face of the evidence afforded by recent research, must be largely due to ignorance of certain irrefutable facts.

These facts not only supply the backbone of our thesis, they also serve to emphasise the glaring inaccuracies and inconsistencies which abound in the writings of De Beauchesne and most of his fellow biographers.

They have apparently vied with each other in producing a heart-harrowing story of unrelieved misery and woe, in which every page throbs with suffering, every line is blotted with tears.

After reading their highly coloured accounts of all the child underwent at Simon's brutal hands—they are so lavish of their sickening details, that one wonders how the writers could have learnt them!—it is natural to infer that Simon must have devoted every hour of his days and nights to ill-using his victim, and that his one interest in life was to devise fresh tortures for him.

De Beauchesne, Eckard, and Chantelauze all agree in attributing the young king's premature death in the Temple to Simon's barbarous treatment. For they maintain that this regime, which lasted from July 3rd, 1793, to January 19th, 1794, was long enough and sufficiently severe to develop and foster the germs of the tubercular affection which they persist in declaring was latent in the Dauphin's constitution, and which finally brought him to an early grave.

Though points of evidence seldom avail to convert or convince unbelievers, surely the *absence* of those points ought somewhat to shake their confidence in the reliability of statements, be they ever so plausible.

That the biographers of Louis XVII. must necessarily have drawn upon their imagination for many of their prolific details is beyond dispute. Take, for instance, the distressing story of Simon's brutality to the child on the first anniversary of Louis XVI.'s death.

(At the very outset of the tale we are confronted with an inaccuracy, for that anniversary would have been January 21st, and it is matter of history that Simon left the Temple on January 19th, having resigned his gaolership for good.)

According to these imaginative authors, Simon found the

child one night kneeling up on his bed, fast asleep, with his hands clasped. Furious at what he interpreted as an act of insubordination, Simon, after consulting with his wife as to how he should be punished, finally drenched him with a jugful of ice-cold water.

With never a murmur at this brutal awakening, the poor little victim promptly laid himself down, but presently, in order to avoid the discomfort of his sodden mattress, he crouched down on his pillow, which had remained dry.

Thereupon Simon declared that he should not evade his punishment, and falling upon the boy, seized him by the hair, and yelling that he would teach him how to patter prayers at night like any monk, struck at him full in the face with a hobnailed boot.

"If," adds De Beauchesne, "the little king had not covered his face with his hands, he would have been badly disfigured!"

De Beauchesne reports this scene to have taken place on January 14th. Now considering that only Louis XVII. and Madame Simon were present, who could have repeated all these details to Beauchesne?

Certainly not Simon himself, for within a few months he died on the guillotine. Certainly not the little martyr, and it was almost equally certain that it was not Madame Simon.[1]

The latter, who was a kind-hearted woman, became an inmate of a home for incurables in the Rue de Sèvres, where she remained from 1796 till her death in 1819. She was a great favourite with all the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul who knew her.

They maintained that Madame Simon was a gentle, good-natured woman, who was never known to lose her temper. She cherished a very affectionate remembrance of the royal

[1] Naundorf himself, speaking of his experiences at Simon's hands, says: "Without wishing to draw on my readers' sympathy, I cannot keep silence on my cruel sufferings from the separation from my devoted mother and aunt and sister. Nothing but the severity of my gaolers could stem the torrent of my tears. . . . But I was still more unhappy after Simon and his wife left, for before they went away they had become much less brutal to me."

child, whom she declared on oath at the official inquiry in 1817 she had always treated with respect. She always affirmed, moreover, that her husband had only handled him roughly in the presence of the authorities, in order to ingratiate himself with the Commune.[1]

Chantelauze does admit that however brutally Simon may have used the child during the first three months of his gaolership, his conduct changed greatly for the better from October onwards.

To return, however, to our line of argument from which we deviated in order to give an illustration of the manner in which Beauchesne and other writers handle all the facts connected with Louis XVII.'s imprisonment.

(We shall have frequent occasion to return to this charge.)

There is no need either to exaggerate or minimise the little king's sufferings in the Tower. They will always make some of the saddest reading in history.

The heartless fashion in which he was torn from his mother, and the cruel shock of suddenly finding himself in the power of a low, coarse man like Simon, would have caused acute distress to any child, let alone the tenderly nurtured son of a long line of kings.

Added to this, the confinement of prison life and the sense of loneliness which must have been emphasised by his daily intercourse with the cobbler, as well as the lack of all the refinements of life to which he had been accustomed from his babyhood, must have entailed an amount of suffering, both physical and mental, upon the poor little prisoner, which we can perhaps hardly realise.

Whilst fully appreciating all these conditions, however, we still maintain that the treatment which Louis XVII. experienced at Simon's hands was not of so desperate a nature as to ruin the constitution of a thoroughly healthy child and definitely shorten his life.

And now to examine in detail the actual regime to which the young king was subjected during Simon's gaolership.

[1] See *Enquête Archives Nationales.*

The scrupulously careful researches of modern writers, notably MM. Provins and Otto Friedrichs, have brought certain indisputable facts to light connected with Louis XVII.'s imprisonment.

These greatly modify much that has been written and implicitly believed upon this point.

Roughly speaking, what are the conditions which in the long-run would be likely to prove permanently injurious to an otherwise healthy child's development and life?

According to the best authorities, they are:

Insufficient sleep, want of air and exercise, improper food, and physical ill-treatment.

That these conditions were not all present, or certainly not to an appreciable degree in the case of Louis XVII., we gather distinctly from the evidence at our disposal.

The child certainly did not suffer from want of sleep.

On the contrary, we find that Simon and his wife were only too glad to hurry their charge into bed and turn the key upon him.[1] Madame Simon was then free to indulge in lengthy gossips with the other officials, whilst Simon, as we know, was only anxious to join the guards on duty on the first floor of the Temple and revel in his two favourite vices, gambling and drink. We also hear of his frequent attendance at the evening sittings of the Commune, and of his taking a prominent part in the debates of various committees.

Hence we may safely infer that instead of suffering from late hours, Louis XVII. had more than his fair share of sleep. Nor indeed do we find any suggestion to the contrary in either Beauchesne's or Eckard's pages.

That the child's rest was often disturbed when Simon came home in a drunken condition is highly probable, and it is equally possible that sometimes on those occasions the poor boy suffered ill-treatment from his gaoler.

But to those who can remember the barbarous usage dealt out—*not so very long ago*—to junior boys at public schools by their bullying seniors, to those who can recall

[1] See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. i. p. 32.

the draggings out of bed, the cruel beatings — notably "tundings"!—the drenching with cold water, the tossing in blankets and other similar atrocious tortures, the sufferings which the little king may have occasionally undergone at night do not appear so excessive as to have *necessarily* contributed to his premature death.

If these literal "deeds of darkness" were really fraught with such inevitable danger to life, how many of our public school men would have survived the ordeal, which in their case was not limited to six months?

As to air and exercise, the child was certainly not deprived of either. Every day, except during the short illness, to which we shall refer later, he walked out in the Temple grounds. Of this we have indisputable proof furnished by an official statement which is reported in the *Moniteur* of July 9th, 1793.

A few days after his separation from the Queen, a rumour was circulated that Louis XVII. had been removed from the Tower and carried in triumph to St. Cloud.

Although the Commune were well aware that it was untrue, they instantly despatched Drouet and other members of the Committee on a visit of inspection to the Temple.

(This no doubt was to make an impression on certain sections in Paris, as well as on the good folk in the provinces.)

"We found the child playing quietly in his own room," the deputies reported; "we then inquired if Simon was fulfilling his duties, and specially reminded him that little Capet was to walk in the Temple grounds every day, so that the officials might see him and be certified of his presence in the Tower."

It appears, moreover, that when Louis XVII. did not go down into the garden, he played on the terrace outside the Tower, where he was allowed to have a little garden of his own and cultivate flowers.

The little Dauphin's passion for gardening is matter of history. In 1792, he was so devoted to his miniature garden at the Tuileries that he was never happy anywhere else.

Madame Tourzel, his governess, writing of him at that time, says, "We rarely go further than Mgr. the Dauphin's little garden."

His love of making bouquets as a child was also remarkable, and one of the very rare occasions on which he is known to have complained during the early part of his imprisonment in the Tower, was when he cried because he could not give his mother flowers from his own garden.

After that Marie Antoinette made interest with the prison authorities to allow him a little garden.

This love of cultivating flowers is one of the many traits which are shared between the Dauphin of the palace and the poor clockmaker of later days, and which serve as links to connect the man with the child who was father to that man.

Naundorf, we are told, was passionately fond of a garden, and in the days of his greatest poverty his wildest ambition was to possess a plot of ground to cultivate with his own hands.

Years after he had left Prussia, when Xavier Laprade visited Spandau the townsfolk told him how diligently the clockmaker would cultivate his flowers and vegetables in his beloved garden on the banks of the Spree.

Writing to his little daughter in later life, Louis XVII. says: "I am delighted to hear that you find such happiness in your flowers and rabbits. I too as a child loved my garden and kept rabbits."

The Dauphin's affection for the latter was very great, specially for one white rabbit, which was destined to find its way into history. For the scar left on the child's lip by the bite of his favourite "Aristocrat," as the Dauphin dubbed his furry pet, was one of the marks which, as we shall see, served in later years to establish Louis XVII.'s identity.

Neither did he want for toys. Even Eckard allows that he had plenty of playthings, and mentions several very remarkable and beautiful ones which the child possessed.

Probably these had come from the Tuileries, for when the royal family were removed to the Temple, the Queen had

enormous cases brought from the Tuileries, containing plate and other "articles de luxe" which must have contrasted rather grimly with their dingy surroundings.

The children's lesson-books, maps, and pictures were also remembered in the list that Marie Antoinette made, as well as playing-cards, a bagatelle-board, and a ball with which the Dauphin played with his father in the Temple grounds. So it is probable that along with the other possessions came the toys of which Eckard speaks.

On one occasion we hear of Simon bringing a jew's-harp home for his little charge.

According to Eckard—who loves to paint every detail in the blackest colours—Simon accompanied his gift with "the most horrible oaths, bidding the child pipe his loudest the next time that his mother and aunt played the clavecin, so that there might be a grand hullabaloo!"

Considering, however, that by no possibility of means could the feeble sound of the jew's-harp penetrate to the prisoners on the third floor, it is highly improbable that Simon would have made such a suggestion.

But it is very characteristic of the writer to go out of his way to blacken the wretched cobbler, even when he apparently showed a little kindness to the young king.

Chantelauze *does* admit that when Simon was sober he was not systematically brutal to his prisoner, that he was even capable of showing compassion to him, so that he practically infers that the cobbler was not always and altogether the inhuman fiend represented by Eckard.

On another occasion we hear that some of the Temple officials persuaded Simon to ask permission of the authorities to transfer a musical-box which had been stored in another part of the tower to the little king's room.

The box was a piece of very clever mechanism made to represent a cage, and so arranged that when once wound up, a canary flew about the cage, flapping its wings and singing the "Marche du Roi" with wide-opened beak and swelling throat.

As it proved to be out of repair, Simon applied to the head of the National Treasury for the sum of 300 francs to be paid to the clockmaker Bourdier for putting it into working order, the which sum was duly paid, as is proved by a document still extant in the Archives de l'Empire.

According to this document, the repairs were made in the interval between December 1793 and January 19th, 1794.

The young king was delighted with his beautiful toy, whilst in order to improve on the automatic performance, some of the guards made the round of the Temple district begging for a few live canaries to add to the little Capet's amusement.

Their request was readily granted, indeed the people seem to have vied with each other as to who could give the prettiest bird or the sweetest songster.

Louis made a special pet of one bird which was so tame that it would perch on his finger and nestle close to his face. To distinguish it from the other canaries, the little king tied a pink bow on one of its claws.

These details fall like flashes of golden light athwart the pages of our gloomy story, but here again the boy's biographers are at hand to blur the charming little tale with a heart-breaking sequel.

For according to them, one fine morning a municipal guard invaded the child's room, and pretending that the bird was singing a proscribed tune and wearing a badge prohibited by the Commune, he seized the canary by the neck and flung it out of Louis's reach.

He further proceeded to order the removal of the cage. The unhappy little king, adds the writer, was too much afraid of Simon to offer any resistance. Beauchesne repeats much the same story as Eckard.

But what glaring inaccuracy and improbability mark their statements!

To begin with, is it likely that Simon, who had gone to the trouble of procuring the musical-box, and who was,

moreover, a member of the Commune and its special delegate in the Temple, would have suffered such interference on the part of a mere municipal guard ?

Surely Eckard would never have made such a palpable slip of the pen, if he had remembered that in an earlier part of his work, he had stated that Simon was vested with almost unlimited authority in his own department !

Beauchesne is guilty of a grave inaccuracy.

He maintains that the scene with the municipal guard took place on December 19th, whereas we know, as stated above, that the cage was not under repair until *after December 21st;* so that according to Beauchesne the thrilling little tragedy must have occurred several days *before* the musical-box had found its way into the prisoner's apartments !

One last word with reference to Louis XVII.'s amusements.

Not only did Simon procure the musical-box for his little charge's entertainment, but on another occasion we find him asking and obtaining permission from the members of the Temple Committee to remove a billiard-table from another part of the Tower to the king's rooms.

(This incident reminds us how entirely the Tower must have differed in its arrangements from ordinary prisons.)

Directly the table was put up, Simon—according to Eckard—"*dragged* the child to the billiard-room to show him how to play. After that, all the officials in turn wanted to instruct the young king how to handle his cue. As it often happened," goes on Eckard, "that the men were drunk, the child sometimes met with very rough usage. They would snatch him up in their arms and toss him about, to the great discomfort of their victim, who was sickened by the smell of spirits and bad tobacco."

It was on one of these occasions that the Commandant of the "Force Armée" and another officer happening to be spectators of this horse-play, became so alarmed for the prisoner's safety that they reported the proceedings in the billiard-room to the authorities. "Thereupon," says Eckard,

"these latter promptly ordered that the table should be taken to pieces and removed from the Tower!"

Now here again we cannot choose but doubt that the writer has deliberately distorted facts, and as usual clothed them in the most sinister garb. At any rate, Chantelauze (who can certainly never be accused of making the best of his subject) tells the same story in very different words.

According to him, Simon had procured the billiard-table entirely for the sake of affording a new amusement for the child, and he describes how Simon took the little king *quietly* —"tranquillement"—into the room to teach him the rules of the game.

Finding, however, that it bored the boy to play with his gaoler, Simon forthwith provided him with a playmate of his own age, in the person of the little girl Clouet, the daughter of the princesses' washerwoman.

Surely this account puts a very different complexion on the matter. Further, as to the officials and their rude behaviour, they could not have been *all* alike in that respect. For proofs are extant that the little king was greatly attached to one, at least, of the municipal guards, Barelle by name, who spent all his spare time playing with the child. And that there is no doubt that Simon encouraged this odd friendship is clear, for we find it on record that when Louis XVII. asked permission to give "a whole fowl" to Barelle as a mark of his gratitude for his kindness to him, Simon gave it readily.

This proof of Louis XVII.'s attachment to, at any rate, one of his persecutors, taken in conjunction with Simon's care to provide him with a playfellow of his own age, goes far to discount the painful details supplied by Eckard, whilst his statements with regard to the action taken by the Commandant of the "Force Armée" are simply preposterous.

Is it likely that the authorities, who had invested Simon with what was practically unlimited power in all that concerned his own department, would pay any regard to the complaints of an outsider?

The "inhuman Simon" somewhat vindicated

In concluding this chapter, we claim to have established so far, that in spite of the undoubted hardships and occasional ill-treatment to which Louis XVII. was probably exposed during Simon's gaolership, he nevertheless enjoyed on the whole his fair share of sleep, of fresh air, and daily out-door exercise, combined with the recreation of cultivating a little garden of his own.

Further, we find that not only was he well provided with toys and amusements, some of which the "inhuman Simon" was directly instrumental in procuring for him, but that he had at least one grown-up playfellow to whom he was greatly attached, as well as a playmate of his own age.

CHAPTER IV

Quality and quantity of food supplied to the royal prisoners in the Temple —Details of kitchen "personnel"—Various items of food supplied to the royal table—Order issued by the Municipality of Paris, restricting number of dishes supplied to the royal prisoners—Chaumette's violent attack upon the Council of the Temple—Proposal to remove royal prisoners to an ordinary gaol—Various sums spent by the Commune for Louis XVII.'s benefit—Medical care bestowed on the little king—Untrustworthy statements to be found in the writings of Beauchesne and others—Their detracting statements concerning Dr. Thierry—Madame de Tourzel's testimony to Dr. Thierry—Louis XVII. under the doctors' care—A weird soup—Enumeration of doctors' visits paid to the little king—Chantelauze's assertions with regard to Simon's treatment of Louis XVII. refuted—Hébert's vile plot against the Queen—Madame Simon's care for Louis XVII.—His laundress's bill—Lebœuf's protest as to Simon's behaviour in the king's presence—Dr. Naudin's anecdote of Louis XVII.

We now come to examine the matter of the food which was supplied to the little king during Simon's gaolership.

From the documents still extant in the National Archives, we can prove that on the whole he suffered no real privation.

When the Convention first consigned the royal family to the Temple, they took care to provide them—at any rate temporarily—with all they might require for their ease and comfort.

For instance, on August 12th, 1792, the sum of 500,000 francs was paid in to the account of the Minister of the Interior to defray the expenses of Louis Capet and his family.[1]

These funds were not to be spent merely on the actual outgoings for the royalties, but they were also to defray the expenses of their own private suite, which was a very large one, as well as to remunerate the supernumerary officials who had been added to the ordinary prison staff.

[1] See *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française*, by Bouchez and Roux, vol. xxi. p. 307.

Food supplied to the Royal Family

The presence of the royal family in the Tower must have involved a huge increase in the Temple expenditure, as is obvious from the records of the disbursements made on their behalf.

The kitchen "personnel," for instance, was represented by Gagnier, the head cook, whose annual salary amounted to 4000 francs, having under him Meunier, the roaster, and three other "kitchen knaves." All these five had been in the King's service at the Tuileries.

Surely in providing for the service of their table so lavishly, the Convention did not treat its captives like ordinary prisoners.

At any rate, up till July 1793 their meals must have been served in very much the same style as they were at the Tuileries. The entries for the expenses of the Temple household from the month of September 1793 are missing from the Archives, but a glance at the bills rendered for the previous months of July and August by Estienne the grocer, Melain the greengrocer, and by various butchers, poulterers, and fishmongers, show that the royal family were certainly not stinted in their food. Studying these, we find that on one and the same day, the fishmonger alone delivered large quantities of soles, brill, shad, pike, and carp for the prisoners' table, whilst the poulterer's bills show that from four to six fowls were dressed every day for the royal family's consumption. As for their drinks, Gouffet, the wine-merchant, had orders to supply them with whatever they desired. It appears that their daily allowance was three quarts of good wine ("vin fin").[1]

For many years past, the Queen had drunk nothing but water, and as she had a preference for that of a certain spring at Ville d'Avray, Madame Richard, one of the female warders, had orders from the police authorities to fetch a daily supply of water for Marie Antoinette's use.[2] This style of living,

[1] See *Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 4392.

[2] Beauchesne quotes an order issued August 5th, 1793, by the Council of the Temple, directing that two bottles of the water to be brought daily to the Tower from Ville d'Avray shall be delivered at the Conciergerie, the prison

however, was not continued throughout the whole of the royal family's sojourn in the Temple. On September 22nd, 1793, the following order was issued by the Municipality of Paris :—

"The Council being of opinion that the strictest economy should be exercised with regard to the prisoners in the Temple, hereby order : 1st, that from to-day onwards, no pastry or poultry shall appear on the former's table. 2nd, that the prisoners shall only be allowed one breakfast dish. 3rd, that their dinner shall consist of soup, meat, and some sort of pudding. Each person shall be allowed daily one half bottle of 'vin ordinaire.' 4th, they are only to have two dishes for their supper. Signed by the deputies of the Temple staff, Vaillard, Robin Tonnelier, Veron."[1]

As the word used to denote the prisoners is *détenues* throughout, it is quite clear that those orders only concerned Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale. The king's food, therefore, was not interfered with—no doubt because he and Simon shared the same table, and the Commune did not wish to curtail the latter's privileges.

That the occupants of the second floor of the Tower had enough food and to spare is evident, as Simon allowed Louis XVII. to give away a whole fowl to Barelle.

Shortly after Marie Antoinette's execution, October 16th, 1793, Chaumette made a violent attack upon the Council of the Temple, accusing them of culpable folly in keeping "three individuals alive" in the Temple prisons, and thus burdening the nation with the unnecessary expense of both feeding and guarding them.

Thereupon the Commune decided that they would approach the Convention in a body and demand the immediate transfer of the prisoners to some gaol, where they would be treated like ordinary felons. This movement,

to which Marie Antoinette had been transferred before her execution ; from which it appears that the other members of the royal family also drank the same water.

[1] See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. i. p. 40.

however, was quashed by the Committee of Public Safety. Yet the question was not allowed to rest.

On November 21st, the same proposal was renewed in the following terms: "The Council have decided that on December 15th they will approach the Convention *en masse* and demand to be released from their duties as custodians of the Temple; and further, that the prisoners now confined therein be removed to ordinary prisons. And they hereby direct Legrand to draw up a petition to that effect."

This second attempt met with the same failure as the first. According to Eckard, Beauchesne, and Chantelauze, however, though the motion of the Temple Committee was rejected so far as the removal of the prisoners was concerned, the Convention, "displaying a weakness which was altogether unworthy of its former conduct, surrendered the whole management of the internal economy of the Temple to the members of the Council."

Even admitting that this statement is correct, and that Gagnier, Marchand, Neunier, Chrétien, and almost all the other members of the domestic staff were then and there dismissed, thereby greatly lessening the expenses of which Chaumette complained so bitterly, we fail to trace any other signs of serious retrenchment in the household economy of the Tower so far as Louis XVII. was concerned.

For although the first protest had been made by the Commune on September 21st, we find that in the following October they sanctioned the outlay of 100 francs for papering the large room in which the billiard-table was set up, whilst towards the end of December 300 francs were spent on repairing the musical-box.

It is quite clear from extant evidence that Madame Royale enjoyed various little indulgences in the way of food, whilst, as we said above, the king was undoubtedly a privileged person so far as his meals were concerned.

Furthermore, considering the extreme care exercised by the authorities in the supervision of the child's health, and that neither medical advice nor remedies were grudged to

him,[1] it is not logical to suppose that he would have been stinted either in the quality or quantity of his food.

But it is noteworthy that whilst Beauchesne and his literary "confrères" are careful to fill their pages with the most harrowing details of the little king's maltreatment, they quite forget to dwell upon all the devotion and attention which the doctors lavished so freely on their little patient.

And why?

Because, at the sacrifice of accuracy, probability, and even possibility, they are determined to establish their theory with regard to the causes which contributed to the early death of Louis XVII. in the tower.

This "motif," to borrow a musical term, underlies all their statements and is responsible for the shameless way in which they distort and exaggerate the plainest facts almost beyond recognition.

Hence their detracting remarks anent a certain Dr. Thierry who attended the little king when he was suffering from the results of a slight accident.

In the May of 1793, while the child was still under the Queen's care, he contracted an internal rupture whilst mounting his rocking-horse. This injury presently occasioned such disquieting symptoms that Marie Antoinette requested the Temple authorities to send for M. Brunyer, the physician-in-ordinary to the royal children.

The Council General of the Commune, however, decided that as the granting of this request would violate the principles of equality, M. Brunyer should be set aside and that Dr. Thierry should be sent instead. The latter was a member of the Council and the head of the whole prison medical staff.[2]

The biographers of Louis XVII. are prompt to represent Thierry as little short of a heartless monster, and they exhort their readers in rousing language to reflect on the kind of

[1] This is proved irrefutably by certain official documents extant in the National Archives.

[2] See *Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 4392.

individual that a prison doctor must be who is forced to spend the greater part of his life attending on felons!

Madame de Tourzel, on the other hand, whose evidence at this date is impeccable, gives Dr. Thierry a very different character.[1]

"Thierry has happily been sent to the Tower," she says, "for as he attends the Maréchale de Monchy, I can easily see him and hear all about our dear little prince. He seems deeply impressed with the sad position of the royal family, and went straight to Brunyer in order to find out all about the child's constitution and temperament. Moreover, he will consult with Brunyer as long as he is in attendance on the prince."

After several weeks of treatment, Thierry saw fit to call in Soupé, one of the best surgeons of the day, apparently a specialist in hernia. Soupé in his turn employed one Pipelet, a surgical-instrument maker, and we find the little prince receiving regular visits from both Soupé and Pipelet *long after he had been removed to Simon's care.*

When, during July, Louis XVII. was attacked by a childish ailment, Thierry was again in attendance, employing one Robet, a chemist, to furnish all the necessary medicines, lotions, &c., and directing him, moreover, to supply the patient with specially prepared broth ("bouillons") prepared "au bain-Marie."

These were concocted from veal, the ribs and hind legs of frogs, the juice of certain green vegetables, &c. &c.

(What other weird ingredients may that suggestive etcetera have represented?)

From the account rendered by Thierry to the "Committee de Secours Publics"[2] it is evident that the doctor paid eighty-seven consecutive visits to the young king.

(He came twice daily for the first three weeks after the accident.)

After his patient's convalescence, and during Simon's

[1] See *Mémoires de Madame la Duchesse de Tourzel*, vol. ii. p. 30.
[2] This is given in full in *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. i. p. 44.

gaolership, the doctor made sixteen professional visits to the Tower at intervals extending from August to the day of Simon's departure in the following January, in order to ascertain that the child was going on satisfactorily and that Pipelet's apparatus was answering its purpose. Soupé on his side paid fifty visits to the royal prisoner, beginning on June 11th.[1]

Now is it probable that either Thierry, who, according to Madame de Tourzel, was a royalist at heart, or Soupé, who was not only a very distinguished surgeon, but a most conscientious man, would have allowed their patient to have had either insufficient or unwholesome food?

It is even more glaringly unlikely that, as Chantelauze asserts, Simon was in the habit of forcing the unfortunate child to drink to excess, in order to have a companion in his drinking bouts.

"Pour avoir un compagnon de ribotte."

As it is evident from Dr. Thierry's own memoirs that he never gave notice beforehand of his visits to the Temple, and as he was always careful to make a close examination of the child, is it probable that if Simon had really been guilty of such wickedness, the inevitable results would have escaped Thierry's notice?

Neither, if such a state of things had existed, would Soupé have failed to detect it.

The foundation for these groundless charges was probably furnished by the one shameful occasion, when it *is* possible that Simon may have intoxicated the unhappy child, not for his own amusement, but to serve the vile ends of Hébert.

We allude to the occasion when this wretch had conceived the diabolical idea of attacking the Queen's reputation through the medium of her innocent child.

The details are too well known to need repetition here, but there is good reason for believing that, in order to avoid any resistance on the little king's part, in the matter of sign-

[1] The Committee de Secours Publics paid ten francs for each visit.

ing his name to the infamous act of accusation against Marie Antoinette, he *was* either heavily drugged or intoxicated.

His name is traced in such trembling and unsteady characters, that it is easy to believe that the poor little writer must have been under the influence of either drink or drugs.

With regard to the care bestowed on the person and clothes of Louis XVII., we find that Madame Simon took a pride in fulfilling her duty. Every morning she washed and dressed the child—being most particular, we are told, in the matter of baths—and brushed his hair.

Even Chantelauze admits that she took the greatest pleasure in her personal attendance on him, though, of course, he qualifies this meed of praise by the following grandiloquent passage, which affords an excellent example of the author's greed to blacken and distort poor Madame Simon's most harmless actions.

"In the bygone days of the Merovingians," says this glaringly unprejudiced biographer, "to cut off the long hair of a king was to offer him the greatest insult and to subject him to the lowest form of degradation.

"Yet this cruel outrage was inflicted on the son of Louis XVI. Beneath Madame Simon's ruthless scissors his beautiful fair hair fell from his head, and with it fell also the only diadem left to adorn his regal brow!"

Dear ignorant old woman! Who in their wildest moments would have accused a cobbler's wife in the eighteenth century of ever having heard of the Merovingians, much less of wishing to emulate their manners and customs!

But if such an ordinary hygienic measure, adopted obviously with a view to promoting the comfort and cleanliness of a boy of nine, can be magnified to the proportions of a crime, then Heaven help the credulous who accept such writer's depositions as gospel truth! After this sally, we do not attach great importance to the further statement made by Chantelauze, viz. that Madame Simon aided and abetted her husband in much of the brutal treatment that

Simon dealt out to the young king, and which he dignified by the name of "education."

Madame Simon took the same scrupulous care of the king's wardrobe, keeping all his clothes and under-linen in excellent repair.

A glance at the laundress's bill proves that Louis XVII. was not unduly stinted at that time in the supply of clean linen.

Here is the copy of Madame Clouet's weekly bill for the months of October, November, and December.[1]

"For the little Capet, two night-shirts, two night-caps, two changes of under-linen, two pinafores, two pairs of socks, two cambric handkerchiefs, besides sheets, towels, table-cloths, &c."

These well-authenticated facts with regard to Madame Simon furnish a contradiction to all that has been written and believed as to the dirt and general slovenliness which marked the Simon ménage in the Tower.

That the cobbler and his wife were singularly ill-fitted to have the charge of a delicately nurtured and highly strung child, born on the steps of a throne, is absolutely undeniable, but that they systematically starved, beat, and insulted him, no reasonable person would believe.

We hear of Lebœuf, one of the municipal guards, remonstrating with Simon on account of the ribald songs that he sang in the presence of the little king, and of his lodging a complaint with the Commune as to the "too republican" education which Simon was inflicting on his charge.

Lebœuf (who was a tutor by profession) contended that though the little Capet was the son of a tyrant, he ought to be given a good moral training, such as Telémaque received, who was also the son of a "roi sans-culotte."

This fact as regards Lebœuf is not satisfactorily substantiated.

Not one of the employés in the Temple ever deposed to having seen Simon strike the child or otherwise maltreat

[1] As for Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale, they changed their under-linen and sheets every day (*Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 4392).

him. Had he been beaten only half as violently or as frequently as his biographers represent, the doctors would surely have discovered it, and Simon would have been reported to the authorities.

Granted that the cobbler *did* behave like the foul-mouthed, coarse bully that he undoubtedly was, granted also that he *was* addicted to drink, it is irrational to maintain that he was always in a state of intoxication.

For it must be remembered that his post obliged him to be constantly in evidence, being liable to surprise visits from the deputies of the Convention at any moment—we know that these did actually occur—and that he could seldom have felt himself safe from an unexpected inroad from one or other of the doctors.

So that admitting that Simon *was* insulting and even violent to the little king when under the influence of drink, this could not have happened continuously.

Eckard, the champion "misery-monger," who *specialised* in collecting distressing evidence as to Louis XVII.'s experiences in the Tower, even Eckard allows that Simon sober presented a striking contrast to Simon drunk.

"When not in liquor," he affirms, "he could behave quite decently and even humanely."

As to Madame Simon, we know that she was made of very different stuff from her husband.

That she gained the little king's affection seems probable from the following anecdote told by Dr. Naudin to his children, by whom it was frequently repeated.[1]

On one occasion—December 1793—when he was attending Madame Simon in the Tower, Louis XVII. exclaimed in his presence:

"Oh! you dear Simon! whatever happens to me, I shall never forget you!"

("Ah! ma bonne Simone, quelque soit ma destinée je ne t'oublierai jamais!")[2]

[1] Dr. Naudin was Madame Simon's medical attendant in the Tower.

[2] This incident is recorded in the documents relating to the *Enquête du Comte Anglès*.

And now to quote only a few more samples of the inaccuracies which occur in the hitherto accredited records of this period of Louis XVII.'s life.

Eckard, referring to the unwholesome food which was served to the little prisoner, declares in one place that he was allowed to eat so gluttonously of rich dishes, that though he grew enormously fat, he ceased to grow in height.

A few pages further on, this reliable historian states that owing to improper food, the child outgrew his strength, *his limbs lengthening beyond all natural proportions!*

Still later we hear that his body became bent as though the unfortunate boy found the burden of life too heavy for him!

As to Chantelauze, if his style is less florid, his pen is more severe.

But his anxiety to prove that Louis XVII.'s health was fundamentally wrecked by the Tower regime lands him in a hopeless tangle of inconsistencies and self-contradictions.

For instance, he affirms that the child was allowed no fire in his room, and that in order to warm himself at the Simons' hearth he had to perform the most menial and degrading tasks.

In almost the same breath, however, this brilliant writer assures us that from the beginning of October onwards, Simon's conduct changed permanently for the better, and that he treated his charge with much greater gentleness and humanity.

So that we are driven to infer that it was during the months of July, August, and September that Louis XVII. was condemned to the sufferings of a fireless room!

To some of our readers these discrepancies may seem too trifling to be worth recording, but "trifles light as air" have served before now as "strong confirmation" of weighty matters.

And just as small sands make mountains, so these insignificant misstatements have literally served as sand to

blind many eyes to the real facts of history and the most probable solutions of its mysteries.

Surely, all unwittingly, Eckard, who would have us believe that he was the favoured recipient of all the confidences of endless eye-witnesses, dealt the "coup de grâce" to his own fancy work when he declared that:

"After all had been said and done, the happenings in the Temple would always remain shrouded in a veil of impenetrable mystery!"

We can only cry, "The pity of it!" that he did not arrive at this conclusion before he set out to draw upon his imagination for the construction of that almost baseless fabric of his *Historical Memoirs—falsely so called.*

CHAPTER V

"The Great Book of Great Crimes"—Sénart—Remarkable dialogue—Official report of Louis XVII.'s health—Simon resigns his post in the Tower—His motives for this step—His departure from the Temple—Louis XVII. under the care of the Municipal Guards—Comte Pradel's letter—Disappearance of the Temple registers—Description of the arrangements of Louis XVII.'s prison under the new conditions—Comedy of Errors—Cagnie.

"DOUBTLESS," says M. Provins, "the origin of the exaggerated accounts of Louis XVII.'s sufferings at Simon's hands may be traced in great measure (if not altogether) to a single passage which occurred in a MS. volume labelled "The Great Book of Great Crimes."

This was written by Sénart in his own handwriting.

Sénart at one time occupied a very confidential position, being the Attorney-General of the Commune and secretary of the Committee of General Safety.

In these capacities he had access to all the State secrets of the Convention, and kept all the minutes of the various committee meetings in his own hands, shared in the most private debates, was initiated into all the intricacies of divers intrigues, and had even jotted down the unwary utterances which occasionally fell from the conspirators' lips.

In short, the authorities fully realised that, being possessed of so much information, Sénart might very easily become a source of considerable danger to the Republic.

For that reason, throughout his term of office, he was lodged within the precincts of the Tuileries, and was never allowed to leave his rooms without being attended by a gendarme.

Robespierre openly arraigned him as a suspect, and, after the latter's execution, Tallien and Lecointre revived the charge.

Finally, after being actually condemned to the guillotine, Sénart had a hairbreadth escape and fled to end his days in the provinces. He died at the early age of thirty-six at Tours, whither he had betaken himself.

Many attributed his death to foul play, and Sénart himself believed it to be the result of slow poison administered to him whilst he was still associated with the Commune.

At any rate, it is significant that after his death his "Great Book of Great Crimes" disappeared from Sénart's lodgings, and could never be traced.[1]

The odd sheet containing the passage in question was found by Eckard amongst some loose papers belonging to Sénart, and after keeping it for some years, he published its contents in 1817.

In his *Mémoires sur Louis XVII.* the passage runs thus:

"When Simon was asking for instructions from the Committee of General Safety, he inquired, 'What have you decided with regard to the little Capet? He has been trained to be insolent, but I'll cure him of that, and all the worse for him if it doesn't agree with him. But, after all, what do the authorities wish? Is he to be deported?'

"Answer, 'No.'

"Is he to be killed?"

"No."

"Is he to be poisoned?"

"No."

"But what then?"

"Final answer, 'Got rid of.'"

A sinister utterance truly; but before going further, let us say at once that Eckard has not given this passage in its entirety.

"I have been fortunate enough," says M. Provins, "to have had the original of this document in my hands, and have therefore discovered that Eckard suppresses the remainder of the paragraph, which runs, 'He was neither killed nor deported, but as far as I could gather they opened

[1] See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. i. p. 58.

the body of another child and hid the corpse in the ground near the Tower.'

"Of course," continues M. Provins, "Eckard took good care not to quote these last lines. It would have been most impolitic in his *Mémoires Historiques*, dedicated to the Duchesse d'Angoulême, to hint at the bare possibility of any comedy having been enacted in the Temple."

Although he has actually handled the document, M. Provins is very sceptical as to whether such a dialogue really took place.

Certainly nothing in the documents of either the Commune or the Committee of the Public Safety suggest that any discussion occurred as to the attitude to be adopted towards the "little Capet."

Plenty of written instructions are extant relating to the custody of the child, the internal economy of the Temple, and to the various expenses which the prisoners involved.

Some of these documents proceed from the committees, and some directly from the Convention ; some are in a tone of comparative indifference, others evince a certain amount of interest, whilst a few show actual solicitude for the welfare of the royal captives.

But they contain absolutely nothing to suggest that foul play with regard to Louis XVII. was ever contemplated.

Even Chantelauze declares that it is a mistake to imagine that Simon had orders to "kill the child by inches."

The savage hatred of the republicans against Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette was openly and brutally avowed, but there is no evidence that the paid functionaries of State expressed any ill-will towards their children.

Besides, if Simon had been under orders to do away with his charge, why should he have become so much kinder towards him from the month of October onward?

Why should he have been so anxious to secure amusements for the king and have allowed him to make friends with the kindly Barelle, who was devoted to the child, and to play with little Clouet?

That Simon took it for granted that sooner or later Louis would be released from the Tower, is clear from the speech which Barelle overheard him make to the boy on one occasion.

"Come cheer up! little Capet; when you come out of prison, I'll turn you into a grand shoemaker."

Another important point is incontestable.

Louis XVII. did not dwindle under Simon's care, but on the contrary was officially declared to "be in perfect health" at the close of Simon's gaolership.

Here is the official report, dated January 20th, 1794, and addressed to the Commune de Paris and the Conseil Général:

"We understand that under your latest orders, little Capet is to remain under the immediate surveillance of the officers of the guard of the Temple. Yesterday Simon and his wife handed the child over to us in good health, and begged us to give them a certificate to that effect. We did so. The Council ratifies the certificate given to the citizen Simon."

In order, however, to reinforce their own statements with further evidence, Louis XVII.'s biographers quote passages which are obviously untrustworthy, as we shall presently demonstrate.

They maintain that Madame Royale was at this time much troubled at the startling change in her brother's appearance.

Now we know that from July 3rd to October 7th, 1793, Madame Royale never saw the little king, and that on the latter date they were only in each other's presence for at most half-an-hour.

Then for a few seconds the poor children flew into each other's arms. But certainly on that occasion Madame Royale makes no entry in her Memoirs as to her brother's appearance.[1]

And after that October day, *they never met again.*

[1] As usual, there are discrepancies between the accounts given by different writers as to the details of this meeting. According to Chantelauze, it lasted only a few seconds; from De Beauchesne's, one might gather that it was a matter of some minutes; whilst Madame de Tourzel represents the cruel cross-questioning during which the unhappy princess was confronted with her little brother to have extended to a length of three hours.

There is another important point which should not be overlooked with respect to this period of Louis XVII.'s imprisonment in the Tower (we allude to Simon's gaolership).

And it is this. That as even Eckard admits, there had always been certain very influential individuals, who had been won over secretly to the young king's cause. This makes it all the more improbable that Simon received any order or even hint to compass his death.

And most conclusive argument of all—it is absolutely certain that Louis XVII. did not die under Simon's care, but was on the contrary handed over to his new keepers in perfectly sound health.

On January 8th, 1794, Simon gave notice to the General Council of the Commune of his intention to resign the post of "Guardian and tutor to the son of Capet."

This decision had cost the cobbler much thought and consideration.[1] Owing to the jealousy of his colleagues, Simon found himself in a very difficult position. In short, he was driven to choose between discharging the honourable but unsalaried duties of a member of the General Council of the Commune or continuing to act as the guardian and tutor of the young king, an office for which he was most liberally remunerated.

As a matter of fact, however, his payments had been growing irregular of late, so that the moment seemed a propitious one for resigning what was apparently a most lucrative appointment in favour of a purely honorary one.

And so on January 19th, Simon and his wife left the Temple, the latter having been seriously ill for some three weeks past.

Although crediting Simon with the motives for departing which we have already suggested, Eckard adds that doubtless his real reason for leaving the Temple was because he was tired of tormenting his little charge.[2]

[1] The annual salary paid to Simon amounted to 7000 francs, whilst his wife received the sum of 2000 francs (*Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 4391).

[2] "The patience and resignation of the victim," says Eckard, "had triumphed over the brutality of the torturer."

Chantelauze, on the other hand, declares that by this time Simon had become altogether much kinder to the child, and that in his sober hours he even showed compassion for him.[1]

It was well indeed that the poor little prisoner was in sound health at the beginning of the new regime which was to be imposed upon him during the next six months, the hardships of which did prove hurtful, at any rate temporarily, to his constitution.

On receiving Simon's resignation, the Commune invited the Committee of General Safety to advise them as to the necessity of nominating a new special gaoler for the little Capet.

Did that imply that the Committee was growing more careless of the custody of the young king than the National Convention had hitherto been? Or did they mean to insinuate that it was the business of the Temple staff to look after the Temple prisoners?

Be that as it may, they ended by declaring that it was not necessary to replace Simon.

A resolution was passed four days later, appointing four members of the Commune to pay daily visits of inspection to the Temple, in order to keep the prisoner under observation.

About 240 members were told off to perform this duty in turn. Thus Louis XVII. passed from Simon's hands into the direct charge of the municipal members of Paris, under whose supervision he remained until the 27th of the following July. Not one of those officials, who were periodically in charge of the child from January 20th to July 27th, left a single written note with regard to him.

Probably most of them felt very little interest in him.

Having got rid of the King and the Queen, the Revolution was now running its course and already absorbing the thoughts of the common people.

Louis XVII., in solitary confinement in the Tower and

[1] "Il avait même fini par se laisser attendrir" (see Chantelauze, *Louis XVII.*, p. 218).

seen once in sixty days only by the same set of inspectors, was easily forgotten by the majority of the republicans.

More than probably some sort of register was kept, recording the due attendances of the guards and checking the daily visits of the inspectors, and there were no doubt some important entries relating to the guardianship and treatment of the young king; but if such documents did exist, the Restoration provided for their disappearance at the right time.

An extant letter has indeed come to hand from the Comte Pradel, director of Louis XVIII.'s household, in which he states that all the registers, ledgers, and private documents relating to the confinement of the royal family in the Tower are nowhere to be found, although he goes on to state that they were all duly delivered to the Minister Benezech on April 10th, 1796, who gave a formal receipt for them.

Why, therefore, were they not forthcoming in 1817?

We can only imagine that amongst the unimportant papers there must have been some containing entries of a much graver and possibly incriminating nature. Whatever the solution may be, it is clear that the disappearance of such valuable evidence left the biographers of Louis XVII. fancy-free to depict this period of his prison life.

And they made the most of this liberty! Here is an instance:

Because Hébert and Chaumette have been unanimously considered as the very vilest of all the members of the Commune, Eckard declares that at this juncture they had the whole management of the Temple economy.

After careful research, however, we fail to find the slightest evidence to justify this statement. Besides, after January 1794, neither Hébert nor Chaumette had many weeks to live.

All the same, according to both Eckard and Chantelauze, these two villains superintended in person the arrangements made on the second floor of the Tower for Louis XVII.'s isolation after Simon's departure.

The description they give of the heavily barred and bolted gate which was placed in lieu of a door sounds exactly like that affixed to a wild beast's cage. For the upper part was made of crossed bars closely placed together, whilst the lower part was a sheet of iron. And by way of making security sure, we are told it was fastened with a heavy padlock.

The little prisoner's meals were passed through these bars three times a day, and consisted chiefly of water-soups with a handful of lentils floating in them, a slice of dried-up meat, a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water.[1]

(No wine was allowed ; that was reserved for the officials' use.)

The room in which he was confined was large enough to allow him to take exercise so long as he had strength to do so, but it was so ill-lighted that he could barely catch a glimpse of the sky through the barred windows, whilst when evening came on, he was given no lamp or candle, nor was he ever allowed fires.

Much and all of these details may be true, but it is impossible to place much reliance on any accounts which are blemished by so many inconsistencies. In their love of "piling up the agony" the writers lose sight of all proportion, and consequently overstate the case continually. For instance, if the gate were really as securely barred as they represent, what need would there have been of a heavy padlock ; and if, as they declare, 100 men were really stationed on guard night and day both inside and outside of the Temple, what need would there have been for such a gate at all ?

Then as regards the duration of this cruel isolation, none of the writers are agreed.

[1] Eckard states that the child's food was dealt out with a miser's hand ; but we find, from an official entry dated January 12th, 1794, that the Convention voted a fresh sum of 20,800 francs to defray the expenses of the prisoner, the former sum of 500,000 francs which had been paid out for the same purpose being now exhausted (*Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 4391). At any rate, the funds for the maintenance of the Royal children were not grudgingly given.

Eckard maintains that it lasted sixteen months, while Simon Despréaux—who concerning this period of Louis XVII.'s life is supposed to be the best informed—declares that it extended to a year. As a matter of fact, it lasted six months!

Moreover, certain incidents recorded by Despréaux are mentioned by Chantelauze as having happened six months earlier than the date which Despréaux assigns to them, whilst Eckard, on his side, places them at ten months later.

Truly a comedy of errors!

It is perhaps in depicting this season of solitary confinement that Beauchesne gives the most rein to his imagination.

Every incident is minutely recorded by his pen, nay, he describes every day, every hour, almost every minute which the child passed shut up in his closely barricaded room, with not a human creature to share his solitude or report his words or actions.

Did it never strike this pictorial writer that his readers might very naturally inquire where and how he obtained all this information? There is of course no doubt that during the time that Louis XVII. was left to the mercy of the municipal guards, he must have suffered atrociously. He was deprived of light, air,[1] cleanliness, and every condition, in short, which makes for physical well-being.[2]

Neither is there any doubt that all these privations told cruelly upon the boy's health.

Given his circumstances, it would be idle to deny it.

It is also probably true, that the officials responsible for his safety *did* persecute him wantonly, and that they *were* in the habit of calling him up at all hours of the day and night,

[1] The privation of light is the only fact which is actually established by evidence. This is supplied by an extant document, in which the authorities ordered the shutters to be replaced in front of the windows, whence they had been removed under Simon's regime. This order was issued in consequence of a representation made by one of the Municipals to the effect that it would be well to prevent outsiders from looking into the prisoner's room and expressing compassion for the child (*Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 439).

[2] The details of the insanitary condition of the little king's room are too revolting to inflict on our readers.

and in the most offensive terms, to show himself behind the grating.[1]

Yet we find it difficult to follow Louis XVII.'s biographers in the many minute details which they supply so gratuitously, that now and again they over-reach themselves, and in trying to prove too much defeat their own ends.

For example, we find a harrowing account of how the poor little king would leave his bed at midnight and seat himself at the table, his head resting on his elbows, overwhelmed with melancholy reflections. This may have happened, but as they insist on the absolute loneliness of his long solitary nights, who was on the spot to supply these particulars?

Or again, as no one shared his night vigils, who could have reported that "rats and mice and huge black spiders made the child's bed their happy hunting-ground" until he hit on the ingenious expedient of filling his hat with the bread and meat left over from his meals and placing it on the table in order to divert his loathsome visitors from his bed?

Then again, at one moment they draw a distressing picture of the poor half-nude child dragging himself barefoot across the damp floor; two pages farther on, they assure us that so neglected was his person that Louis XVII. never removed his clothes and *never took off his stockings.*

One last remark: though they speak of the bars placed so closely together in the door that they practically excluded light and air, they proceed to dilate on the "large heavy pitcher of water" which was passed through these bars, and which was almost more than the little prisoner could lift.

We will refrain from quoting any more of the small but not unimportant discrepancies which crop up repeatedly in their writings dealing with this period.

It is noteworthy that they have apparently derived their

[1] It is difficult to understand why the Municipals should *all* have changed into such inhuman brutes, when we remember that under Simon's regime many took a kindly interest in the child.

information on most points from Gagnier, who was, as we know, head-cook in the Temple and in receipt of a yearly salary from the Commune. Apparently he soon grew rich enough to be able to lend money to various officials connected with the Tower, so that he became a person of considerable weight and importance in the economy of the Temple. According to Simon Despréaux, Gagnier knew all the distressing details of Louis XVII.'s sufferings, having been on the spot and seen and heard all that went on, and yet—we find him making the glaring misstatement, that the little king's solitary confinement lasted a whole year!

Whereas, we repeat, it was known beyond all dispute *that it was limited to six months.*

Further, is it likely that if Gagnier made all these revelations, that he would have been absolutely silent as to Laurent's arrival on the scene?

Why should he not have reported how, under Laurent's devoted care, Louis XVII. was nursed back to health and that a complete change was effected in his surroundings?

Last of all, would Gagnier have suppressed the fact that with the coming of Laurent he was allowed free access to the king's room? (We can only conclude that these details would not have been acceptable to the protégé of Louis XVIII., whose one endeavour was to make his work pleasing to his royal patron.)

It is significant, however, that at the very moment when preparations were being made for the removal of Louis XVII. from the Tower, Gagnier disappeared from the Temple.

What could have induced him to relinquish such a lucrative and influential position? Is it possible that Laurent, with whom we know that he was on the best of terms, gave him a hint that his connivance in the plot would be indispensable in order to provide the child with food? And did Gagnier, warned by the experience of others, shrink from embroiling himself in the intrigue?

Was it for that reason that the faithful scullion Caron undertook to fill his place?

A Puzzle

We can only venture on surmises, but the mysterious fate that overtook Caron after the Restoration suggests that Gagnier may have had only too good reason for feeling apprehensive of sharing in the conspiracy.

It is, however, a puzzle which we cannot attempt to solve.

CHAPTER VI

Hébert's and Chaumette's connection with the Temple—Accusation brought by Couthon against Hébert—Charge against Danton—Barère and his party in opposition to Robespierre—Robespierre's stolen visit to the Temple—Correspondence between Robespierre and Louis XVIII.—Probable compact between them—Courtois' valuable evidence—Critical position of the Republic—The great crisis of the Revolution—The famous Ninth of Thermidor—Barras—His visit to the Tower—Laurent appointed gaoler in the Tower.

AMIDST all the baffling mystery which hangs like a thick fog over this portion of Louis XVII.'s existence, shrouding much of its history in its impenetrable folds, two indisputable facts loom out clearly and distinctly.

First, that although Hébert and Chaumette have been held responsible for the solitary confinement imposed on the child with all the sufferings it entailed, their connection with the Temple ceased when Laurent was appointed to the Tower.

Secondly, that it has been proved beyond dispute that Robespierre did make a visit to the Tower.

On March 24th, 1794, two months and two days after his first visit of inspection to the Temple, the notorious Hébert perished on the guillotine. He had been arrested ten days previously on the charge of conspiring for the escape of the royal prisoner, although it was admitted on all hands that his increasing popularity had roused Robespierre's jealousy, and was really the cause of his arrest.

Still, on March 17th, Couthon formally accused Hébert before the Convention of having agreed to accept the sum of two million francs from the Countess de Rochechouard for the purpose of effecting the evasion of "Capet's son" from the Tower, and that he had further attempted to transmit into the Temple a letter and packet containing 50 louis d'or for the same object.

Couthon then stated that as the aim of the conspiracy was to form a regency, the child must necessarily be present at the instalment of the regent, hence their anxiety to obtain possession of his person for the fulfilment of their designs.[1]

Whether or no there was the slightest foundation for this charge as regards Hébert we cannot say (in our own opinion he died a victim to Robespierre's jealousy), still the fact that both Hébert and Chaumette were accused of harbouring loyalist tendencies and were supposed to have forfeited their lives in consequence affords rather a striking contradiction to the statements made by certain writers, that these two men had been instrumental in adding so cruelly to the little king's torments.

Twenty days later the same charge was levelled against Danton, Chabot, Fabre d'Eglantine, De Bazin, De Launai Dangers, and Julien of Toulouse, indicating the evident recrudescence of public attention in the direction of the royal prisoner. Clearly the fear lest Louis XVII. should be spirited out of the Tower and beyond their reach, was the perpetual nightmare which haunted the authorities at this juncture of the Revolution.

According to M. Lenôtre—the author of Baron de Batz's interesting biography—the atmosphere teemed with hints and rumours connected with Louis XVII.

"In the early part of 1794," he writes, "not a single Parisian would have been surprised if they had awakened one morning to find that all the members of the Commune had been massacred, and that Louis XVII. was on the throne with Danton for his Prime Minister!"

The apprehensions entertained by the Convention as to the child's possible evasion from the Temple are proofs that they did not at any rate consider that such a contingency was improbable, in spite of all the precautions they had taken against it.

Had Robespierre lived a few days longer, the Dantonists as well as Barère and his party would certainly have

[1] See *Moniteur*, March 18th, 1794.

accused the Dictator of plotting to set the young king on the throne.

Indeed the day after his execution, Barère, in his report to the Convention, not only charged the deceased with a scheme for the restoration of the monarchy in the person of the child in the Temple, but also added that it had been his intention to marry Madame Royale. The bare idea thrills us with horror![1]

Yet even Robespierre's best friends asserted that the Dictator fully intended to cut short the Reign of Terror and coalesce with the royalists.

There is certainly no doubt that on May 11th, 1794, the very day after Madame Elizabeth's execution, Robespierre paid what one must really call his *stolen* visit to the Temple.

No single official either within or without the Temple appears to have breathed a word of this proceeding, which would never probably have found its way into history had not Madame Royale herself mentioned it in her memoirs.

According to her account, Robespierre came into her room, and though he glanced at her stealthily—"A la dérobée"—he did not utter a single word. Neither did she speak to him, although she handed him a petition representing her brother's sad state of health. This is all the light that history throws upon this mysterious visit, the motive of which it is difficult to explain.

The solution suggested by some writers that he was anxious to reassure himself as to the safety of the young prisoners is hardly tenable. In that case, he would have gone to the Temple with a flourish of trumpets, *more suo*, whereas it is evident that he wished his visit to be kept secret.

But without putting blind faith in Barère's statement that Robespierre wished to marry Madame Royale, we are sure that he was right when he accused the ex-dictator of

[1] Cambacérès is said to have declared that all the republican leaders in turn wanted to marry the Princess.

"Ils voulaient tous l'épouser, à commencer par Robespierre" (Lamothe Langon).

being in correspondence with the Comte de Provence, very shortly before his own death. Incontestable evidence is to hand proving that Robespierre and Monsieur were at one time in communication with each other.

Nor can we forget that Louis XVIII.'s first care on returning to Paris was to institute a search amongst the papers and documents belonging to Robespierre.

It is only too easy to form conjectures as to the usurper's reasons for so doing !

With our knowledge of Monsieur's character, and remembering his many unscrupulous dealings and his mad ambition, it is doing his memory no injustice to suggest that an understanding did exist between him and Robespierre, by which it was agreed that if Robespierre on his side would dispose of Louis XVII. and so leave the road open to the throne, Monsieur in return would promise to bestow his niece's hand on the ex-Dictator.

Promise, we say ; for, of course, once returned to power, Monsieur would promptly hang Robespierre, kicking away the ladder by which he had climbed to his goal, with the base ingratitude which was one of his salient characteristics.

This is only conjecture, however, whereas Barère's report is matter of history.

Besides, there are certain weighty proofs extant which show that Monsieur and Robespierre were on very good terms with each other.

One Courtois, into whose hands Robespierre's papers fell, declares unhesitatingly that they furnished irrefutable evidence of a correspondence between the Dictator and some members of the royal family.

There is no doubt that at this juncture the authorities were greatly exercised in their minds with regard to the young king, evidently considering him in the light of a potentially valuable pawn. That is one of many reasons for rejecting the theory that they wished to compass his death in the Temple.

They knew too well that, skilfully handled, he would be

a useful tool to whosoever was fortunate enough to secure possession of him. Besides, if they had been desirous of his death, why did they not order his execution ?

Seeing that they had murdered both his parents and Madame Elizabeth to boot, why should they stop short at him ?

True, in the case of both Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette they had feigned some justification for their crime by faked-up accusations, which were as base as they were baseless ; but with the majority of the republicans at that time of day, the mere fact of having been born in the purple would have constituted a capital crime, for which death on the guillotine would have been only the just retribution !

But the leading members of the Convention had other aims in view. Those who were in *the know* of the political trend of affairs were well aware that the Republic was already tottering to its final fall. No one could ignore the increase of party splits or the other premonitory symptoms of the approaching collapse of the "powers that were." With such a wreck imminent, it was well to hold fast by some anchor. No one knew then, no one has known since, what heavy stakes were probably placed on the little fair-haired head hidden away at that moment in the gloomy Tower of the Temple.

And meanwhile the great crisis of the Revolution was close at hand.

Late in the evening of July 24th, 1794 (the famous ninth Thermidor), Barras, who had been given the command of the armed police, marched upon the Hôtel de Ville and arrested Robespierre, just as the Dictator was congratulating himself on having achieved a victory after the violent scene at the Convention. All through that memorable summer night, Barras,[1] wearing full military dress and attended by several officers and subordinates, remained afoot.

[1] Barras came of noble stock, being a descendant of one of the oldest families of the South of France. But it had already fallen on evil days before the Revolution, and Barras himself dealt it the *coup de grace*. " Noble as Barras " was the catchword in Provence, where he was worshipped for his reckless extravagance. He began life in the army, but retired with the

But at six o'clock on the following morning, in the first flush of his Thermidor victory, the triumphant hero of the hour presented himself at the Temple and demanded to see the royal children.

Thus it was that Barras was first prominently associated with the two young prisoners in the Tower.

It is stated that immediately after the fall of Robespierre, a rumour was circulated that the royal captives had been carried away from the Temple, but if this were so, the report must have been spread *after* Barras' visit, seeing the early hour of his arrival at the Temple.

Many and various are the versions which have been given of this notable visit.

Here is Barras' own account of the incident.

"On arriving at the prison, I visited the Prince, whom I found much weakened by an illness, which was apparently undermining his constitution. He was lying on a miserable bed, or rather crib, in the middle of the room. I saw that his knees and ankles were much swollen. On seeing me, he roused himself from his apparent drowsiness, saying, 'I prefer this cot to that great bed over there, and I have no complaints to make against any one.' This he added glancing quickly from myself to his attendants as though, whilst enlisting my sympathy, he wished to propitiate his keepers, lest he should incur their anger after my departure.

"'And I,' I exclaimed, 'shall make grand complaints of the filthy condition of this room.'

"I then went upstairs to visit Madame Royale. Her apartment was a few degrees cleaner.

"Having been roused by the unusual noises in the Tower, she had risen early and dressed herself.[1]

rank of Captain, and, leaving his regiment in Pondicherry, returned to take part in the doings of the Revolution.

A boon companion of Marat, he soon made his mark amongst the members of the Convention. (See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. i.)

[1] See Madame Royale's own account of this unexpected visit, which entirely agrees with that of Barras, in her *Rélation de la Captivité de la famille royale à la tour du Temple*. (See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. i.)

"I then directed that the children should take daily exercise in the Temple grounds, and, in consequence of the report that I made to the Committee of Public Safety, several medical men were sent to overhaul the boy. Amongst the latter was Dr. Désault, who formed a very grave opinion of the child's condition.

"Besides allowing the prisoners to take daily outdoor exercise, I directed that two women should be engaged in addition to the Prince's gaolers, in order to attend to his personal wants and to keep his room in a clean and sanitary condition. I learnt afterwards that my orders on this last point had not been obeyed."

Such is the account that Barras has left of his visit, the details of which are as usual misrepresented and distorted by Chantelauze, Lombard, De Langres, and Grand.

The two last make a serious misstatement, namely, that Barras had been invited to visit the Tower by the Temple Committee, whereas, on the contrary, Barras had lost no time in asserting his recently acquired authority by taking the Tower as it were by storm and demanding an interview with the prisoners on the strength of his new position. On leaving the Temple, he appointed Laurent to take over the care of the prisoners.

The selection of Laurent for this post is very significant.

For being a native of the Mauritius, he was a compatriot of Josephine de Beauharnais, and a few days later Josephine became Barras' mistress. Of her anxiety to remove Louis XVII. from the Temple, we shall have much to say by-and-by.

Considering that Laurent had spent the whole of that eventful night with Barras, and that he was appointed to the post in the early hours of the following morning, it is evident that he and Barras must have prearranged it all during the preceding night.

By what would appear an odd coincidence, one Lienard was also promoted to be comptroller of the household expenses of the Temple, so that the two most important posts were

on one and the same day allotted respectively to two of Barras' own creatures.

In making all these arrangements, ostensibly to improve the existing conditions in the Tower, it is more than probable that Barras was actuated—at any rate partially—by a wish to propitiate Joséphine, with whom he was wildly enamoured, and whose sympathies with the royal prisoners were well known to him. Of her share in the Comedy of the Temple, there is abundant and most interesting evidence extant.

CHAPTER VII

Better times for Louis XVII.—Jean-Jacques-Laurent—"Reparation, preparation, substitution"—Discontent amongst the Municipal Guards—Laurent's strategy—Outline of plot for effecting Louis XVII.'s evasion from the Temple—Laurent in his character of stage-manager of the Comedy of the Temple—Barras' motives for promoting Louis XVII.'s evasion from the Temple—Critical position of the Republic—Barras' calculations miscarry.

THE "beautiful, awful summer day" which hurried Robespierre to his well-deserved doom, brought comfort and relief to the suffering child in the Temple.

For with the coming of Laurent, his new gaoler, came likewise better times for the little prisoner in the gloomy Tower.

Jean-Jacques-Christophe Laurent was born at Martinique in 1770. Having property at San Domingo at the time of the nigger rising, he had only just managed to save his life by flying on board a French craft which landed him in France.

On the memorable 27th of July, Laurent, together with two aunts, was occupying a lonely little house in one of the Faubourgs of the Temple. He was evidently a well-educated and well-conducted man, whose manners, according to Madame Royale, left nothing to desire.[1]

Laurent's sojourn in the Temple, which lasted from July 28th till November 8th, 1794, may be divided into three distinct periods. These periods M. Provins has labelled respectively as devoted to "reparation, preparation, substitution."

During the first period, which extended from July to the end of September, Laurent devoted himself to the task of

[1] "Laurent came into my room the day after his appointment," Madame Royale writes, "and asked me if I wanted anything. After that he visited me three times a day, but was always most respectful, and never addressed me as thee or thou." (See *Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Angoulême.*)

nursing the young king back to health. But he also initiated certain radical changes in the official administration of the Temple.

His real object in making these reforms—introduced under the plea of economy—was to get the whole authority of all the departments into his own hands. His method of proceeding, however, raises various questions in our minds, the obvious answers to which afford valuable clues as to the object which this shrewd but daring adventurer had in view.

First, why were all the officials who could swear to the identity of the prisoner gradually relieved of their duties in the *interior* of the Tower?

Secondly, why, when the time came for Laurent to reorganise the domestic staff of the Temple, did Gagnier leave the Tower?—although during the first period of Laurent's stay in the Temple, Gagnier was his willing helper in caring for the little invalid.

Why, too, at the beginning of the second period of Laurent's gaolership was Caron, the faithful kitchen knave, removed from direct attendance on the prisoner although he had been more or less in daily touch with Louis XVII. for the last two years?

Why did he never enter the rooms on the second floor of the Tower after the beginning of October, and why was he kept in such ignorance of the prisoner's condition that on the very day of the latter's death and on the following morning, he actually served up the meals as usual, delivering them over to Lasne at the top of the stairs, as he had done when the child was still alive?

Why again did Laurent during a period of more than three months remain in sole charge of the royal children, although the authorities had recommended him to apply for an assistant—obviously to give him the chance of being able, if the need should arise, of proving an *alibi* for himself. And why finally did they appoint a second gaoler on November 8th, 1794—a very significant date?

To all these questions we shall find what we hope will appear to our readers quite logical explanations.

The second division of Laurent's term of office in the Tower is comprehended in the few weeks intervening between the end of September and November 9th, 1794.

This interval was marked by a complete change of front with regard to the treatment of the child in the Tower and all that concerned him. It seemed to the onlookers as if a darkness that could be felt had suddenly overtaken the little prisoner and his immediate surroundings, wrapping him in a cloud of impenetrable mystery.

Why was he completely isolated and hidden from the view of all but Laurent? Why did he become so invisible that the municipal guards grew suspicious, and one of their officers loudly declared that "for all they knew to the contrary, they might be mounting guard over stones and nothing else!"

Inside the Tower, the officials openly accused Laurent of hatching some plot of his own.

The third and last division of Laurent's sojourn in the Temple began on the November day—it was the 9th—when Gomin was appointed his colleague. And again, we ask why was this appointment delayed until Laurent had completed all his reforms in the internal organisation of the Temple, and so entirely changed the old order that Gomin and himself were now the only officials who had access to the prisoner's apartments or any personal contact with him?

On what a sweeping scale Laurent's reforms were made may be gathered from the fact that all the guards outside the Temple, and practically all the officials within, were dismissed and replaced by substitutes chosen from the different quarters of Paris, to the number of 280 men. This was a piece of shrewd strategy on Laurent's part, because as these municipals were to succeed each other in turn and only remain on duty for one day, the same individual would at that rate reappear at the Temple after an interval of many months.

(Practically, as Laurent probably foresaw at the time, not a single one did return for the second time.)

It is noteworthy, because it lends colour to our theory that Laurent was really Barras' tool, and that at the very moment when he was devising and carrying out all these high-handed measures, Barras and his devoted colleagues, Harmand, Mathieu, and Reverchon had secured posts on the Committee of General Safety, which placed the control of the prisoners in the Temple directly in their hands. So much for the general outline of Laurent's activities in the Temple.

Now surely if we once admit the possibility that Laurent may have been placed in the Tower by Barras for the express purpose of effecting Louis XVII.'s evasion, the mystery which at first sight veils his proceedings is quickly rent. His whole plan of action and the motives which inspired it unfold themselves clearly before our eyes, and we find the various problems solved which have hitherto haunted the minds and vexed the brains of many who have tried to unravel the tangled history of the "Child in the Temple."

But since the young king's evasion from the Tower could only be effected through the substitution of another child (as a matter of fact *two* boys in succession played the part of Louis XVII.'s substitutes), the question of these substitutions forms the whole crux of our thesis.

For if it could be satisfactorily proved that such interchange did take place, the most prejudiced anti-Naundorfists would at any rate give their *consideration* to our side of the story.

And as it is clear that the whole "Comedy of the Temple" hinges upon the vital question of the substitutes, it behoves us to examine very particularly into all the evidence available on this point, in order to show by whom and *why* this evasion was probably planned, by whom and *how* it was carried through.

It would be well, however, to try and sketch out the plan, as it were, of the plot to be enacted in the Tower—the

argument, so to speak, of the comedy—as a kind of guide to those who are willing to follow us through the devious and winding paths of policy and intrigue pursued for their own ends by the promoters of Louis XVII.'s evasion from the Temple.

As has been already stated, it was a matter of self-interest to Barras to remove Louis XVII. from the Temple, but, whilst keeping him alive and within sight, it was equally necessary to give the impression to the world at large that the little Capet was dead.

These distinctly conflicting ends could only be satisfactorily accomplished in one way, namely, by removing the royal child from the Temple and at the same time establishing the fact beyond all reasonable doubt of his death within its walls. To achieve this object it was therefore needful to supply Louis' place with another boy, and to provide that that child should die when the moment was ripe for the public announcement of the death of Louis XVII.

As, however, the whole object of their intrigues would have been frustrated if the death could not be established by the evidence of eye-witnesses, it was indispensable to the success of their scheme that the author of the young king's civil death should be able to produce certain witnesses, who would be prepared to identify the dead child in the Tower as being little Capet.

To arrange this without resorting to the risky expedient of buying false witnesses, it was necessary to make a clean sweep of all the outdoor guards and all the indoor officials who had become familiar with the real prince and to supply their places with strangers, who having never set eyes on him, would therefore accept his substitute as being himself without any demur.

But after the death, came first the forging of the false death-certificate, then the post-mortem (which brought such complications that they must needs be met by evil deeds of the darkest hue), after which followed the funeral, or rather burial.

In the execution of this last ghastly farce, the comedy of the Temple reached its climax.

How skilfully Laurent managed all the preliminary *mise-en-scène* of that comedy, how adroitly he manipulated all the stage puppets and how cleverly he arranged all the scene-shifting, will surely be apparent to most of our readers as the play unfolds itself.

That Barras was the moving spirit in the whole intrigue of Louis XVII.'s evasion is apparent from much extant evidence, whilst when we consider the existing state of things at the time of his accession to power, his reasons for desiring to place the young king within his own reach and beyond that of the royalists are not far to seek.

After the murder of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, the hopes of all true royalists throughout France, ay, and beyond France, centred in the child in the Temple. All thoughts were concentrated on procuring his release, and endless schemes were devised for gaining possession of his precious person. It is less widely realised that an equal anxiety to preserve the little Capet's life was dominant in the breast of the majority of the leading republicans, each party being actuated by wholly different motives.

In the little captive, the faithful royalists recognised the rightful heir to their empty throne, the direct representative of the Bourbon line for whom they were ready to lay down their lives.

The republicans, on the other hand, who planned and instigated the "Comedy of the Temple," attached a very different importance to the safeguarding of their young prisoner. When *they* connived at his removal from the Tower, they were influenced by very different motives.

For, to the eyes of the far-seeing regicides, Louis XVII. (as we hinted above) might prove a winning card in playing the ticklish game of "Beggar my neighbour" in which republicans and royalists alike would soon be involved.

For the eventual return of the *emigrés* to France was almost taken for granted by this time. And we have good

reason to believe these considerations must have specially weighed with Barras.

At any rate, it is obvious that during the very first night of his Thermidor triumph, his thoughts were occupied with the young prisoners, and probably also with speculations as to how they could be made to serve his own ends. For Barras knew perfectly well that his own position was a very critical one. The wisest heads were beginning to doubt the "staying power" of the Republic.

Many members of the Plain—that most important section of the Convention—were quietly biding their time, awaiting the fresh developments which the course of events would assuredly bring.

The revolt in La Vendée was spreading and growing more threatening, the majority of the towns were agitating for the re-establishment of the monarchy ; in Paris itself, the royalists were lifting up their heads, whilst amongst the lower classes, a spirit of strong discontent with the actual regime was daily gaining ground. And the most symptomatic feature of public opinion showed itself in the fact, that whenever members of the Convention, such as Hébert and Chaumette, were condemned to death, their judges invariably accused them of having conspired in some way to place Louis XVII. on the throne.

Had not Robespierre thrown a similar accusation in the teeth of Danton and did not Barras in his turn charge Robespierre with the same offence ? The very air seemed to reek with plots and counter-plots in connection with the royal child.

What wonder, then, if at this crucial moment, Barras, foreseeing all manner of possible complications, turned his eyes towards the feeble light which was all but obscured behind the heavy walls of the Temple Tower ?

What wonder if he fell to considering the advantages which might accrue to himself by trading on the child's helplessness and on the unscrupulous ambition of his uncle ?

During the July of 1794, not only Barras, but all thinking

men throughout France, must have realised that the Republic was tottering to its fall. And what would become of all the regicides, when the Commune's bloody tale was told?

There would be a very wide difference then between their position and the rest of their compatriots.

These latter, clamouring for the restoration of the monarchy, would accept no other king but Louis XVII.; so long as the child was known to be alive, his existence would effectually ruin all hopes of Barras' own aggrandisement. For he knew well that if once a regency were formed to protect the young king, his own downfall was a foregone conclusion.

If, however, on the other hand, Barras had made common cause with Monsieur—afterwards Louis XVIII.—and had compassed the child's death, he would probably be playing into the hands of a man who would be able as well as willing to promise ample remuneration for the crime. But could any one rely on his promises?

After Monsieur's base betrayal of Favras, after his heartless desertion of his own brother in the darkest hour of his need, could any one place the slightest reliance on any undertaking that he might give?

How could Barras feel sure that he would not be betrayed himself if occasion should arise?

In this dilemma, there is reason for believing that a course of action suggested itself to Barras, by means of which he could secure a permanent hold on Louis XVIII., by never allowing him to forget that he was only a usurper who possessed no real right to the throne. And this could be accomplished by removing Louis XVII. from the custody of the Commune and promulgating the tidings of his death in the Tower. In other words, whilst providing for the preservation of the child's life, he would condemn him to an "official death," by forging a false certificate of his demise.

In promoting the little prisoner's escape from the Temple, Barras felt that he would be pleasing Joséphine; by promulgating the fabricated certificate of his death he would

quench the hopes of the royalists who were on the alert to secure the person of their young sovereign, and, lastly, he would smooth Monsieur's path to the throne and place the latter in perpetual bondage to himself by making him a participator in the secret of the civil murder.

Such doubtless in outline was the programme which Barras sketched in his own mind during that eventful July night,[1] and hence probably his promptness in presenting himself at the Temple in the early hours of the following morning.

It was characteristic of the hot-headed, "hungry Parisian pleasure-hunter," who was as fearlessly rash as he was shamelessly unscrupulous, to grasp at the spoils within his reach without counting too closely the cost they might involve. Thus he never foresaw Bonaparte's rapid rise to power, never dreamt of his own possible exclusion from public life, never contemplated the long banishment which his new master would inflict upon him!

Later on, when all these unforeseen developments had fulfilled themselves and Barras returned to France, it was to find that though Louis XVII. was still alive, all the conditions had changed.

Louis XVIII. was at the height of his power, Barras himself a mere nonentity in the eyes of the world at large.

He had sinned his sin in vain, so far as his own advantage was concerned!

Fouché and Talleyrand had entered into his labours, whilst he who had so diligently sought to dupe others had been effectually cheated himself. Old and worn out as he then was, Barras, warned by the fate of others, realised that his only hope of enjoying a peaceful life and securing a natural death was to "lie low" and keep silence with regard to the past. And this he did.

To return, however, to the initiation of the plot.

Laurent appeared no doubt to Barras as the best stage-

[1] That we base these suggestions on more substantial grounds than mere conjectures we propose to show elsewhere.

manager he could possibly select for his purpose. And if, indeed, it was under Laurent's auspices that the evasion of Louis XVII. was really effected, Barras must have good reason to applaud his own wisdom in the choice of his agent.

How Laurent set about fulfilling the task that was allotted to him—his first care being the restoration of the little prisoner's health—we shall show later in detail, when we tell the story of the happenings in the Tower during Laurent's term of office. The rough outline of his plan of action we have already given in this chapter.

It is not usual, we know, to furnish the key of a riddle before submitting the terms of that riddle for solution, yet this is what we feel that we have come near to doing in the giving away, as it were, of our plot before telling the story which should clothe it. It occurred to us, however, that we should thus minimise our readers' trouble in mastering the various intricacies with which this remarkable intrigue is complicated and so lessen the strain upon their patience.

CHAPTER VIII

Reforms carried out by Laurent in the Tower—"Monsieur Charles"—"In a glass house"—Simon Despréaux's misstatements—Beauchesne's version of Barras' visit to the Temple—Explosion at Guenelle—The food supplied to Louis XVII.—Lienard in charge of Temple Commissariat—Aumont remonstrates with Lienard—The fictitious Prousseau de Montlouis—Suggested retrenchments in the domestic economy of the Temple.

WITHIN a few hours of Laurent's installation in the Tower a striking change was effected both in the little prisoner's condition and that of his surroundings.

Laurent's first care was to remove him from the loathsome room in which he had been incarcerated for the last six months and to transport him to the first apartment in the second storey of the Tower, which had served as a bedroom to Louis XVI.

The miserable crib was replaced by a new bedstead furnished with fresh bedding and fine new linen sheets. The shutters were thrown open and plenty of light and air were admitted.

As for the little invalid child himself, every care was lavished on his much neglected person. He was duly washed and dressed in clean clothing, his talon-like nails were pared, his long tangled hair was combed and cut, whilst a surgeon was called in to attend to the sores on his neck. From that day, the latter came daily to bathe and dress the wounds until they were healed.

Although Laurent, for wise reasons of his own, did not engage the two women attendants for the young king, as Barras had desired, he secured the services of kind-hearted Madame Mathieu, who looked after the buffet in the Temple court, and who it appears was delighted to wait on the royal child. Caron was also admitted to close attendance on him.

Under Laurent's direction the "little Capet" of the past was to be addressed as Monsieur Charles for the future by all the officials, who were likewise bidden to drop the "tutoiement" when speaking to the prisoner.

Laurent also gave orders to a tailor to make a new sailor suit for the king, of fine slate-coloured cloth.

As soon as his health would permit, we find M. Charles resuming open-air exercise, taking walks in the Temple grounds, or playing on the terraces of the Tower.

Nor did Laurent place any restriction on the child's intercourse with the various officials of the Temple staff or of the household—they were twenty-four in number, exclusive of the municipal guards—on the contrary, in his anxiety to re-establish his charge's health, Laurent seems to have made every concession which might serve to amuse and please him.

During the first two months of Laurent's gaolership the king lived, as it has been said, in a glass house, open to the inspection of all the household and all the municipal guards, who were thus enabled to identify him without the slightest difficulty.

Laurent was diplomatic enough to provide for that.

For, anxious as he was to establish the young king's convalescence as a necessary preliminary to his evasion, he was equally desirous that Louis XVII.'s presence in the Tower should be verified beyond all doubt by all the employés in the Temple, knowing full well that the time was at hand when that presence would be clandestinely removed.

The only inmate of the Temple who was not allowed to see Louis XVII. was his sister Madame Royale.

It is quite certain that the royal children never saw each other after that shameful occasion already alluded to during Simon's gaolership. And the reason for this seems obvious.

It was highly politic to allow unrestricted intercourse between the prisoner and the officials, all of whom could and would be dismissed from the Temple directly the exigencies of the plot demanded this step. Madame Royale,

however, could not be so easily disposed of. Therefore, if the intercourse with her brother had once been allowed, it would have given rise to very awkward complications, if that permission had been withdrawn directly the prisoner on the second floor of the Tower ceased to be Louis XVII.

But it is evident from her Memoirs that the princess was well aware of all the attention that Laurent bestowed upon his charge, and was also informed of the professional visits which Dr. Désault paid to him at the desire of the Convention.

This fact is worth noting, as it contrasts sharply with certain assertions made by Simon Despréaux.

This "best informed writer" on this period of the Temple story entirely ignores Laurent and his sojourn in the Tower and boldly states that Louis XVII. had no specially appointed guardian until the beginning of 1795.[1]

But here again, in consulting the different writers who have undertaken to deal with this stage of Louis XVII.'s imprisonment, we realise how impossible it is to make any two witnesses agree.

Barras' own account of his visit to the Temple,—the accuracy of which has been challenged—which he made in the early sunshine of a July morning, affords strange reading when contrasted with Beauchesne's gruesome description of the incident, furnishing another strong proof of the small value of his work from an historical point of view. As usual his story is told in the most woeful key.

He begins by describing the visit—which indisputably took place at six o'clock in the morning—as having happened in the dead of the night, and dilates upon the awful terror which seized the panic-stricken child on being roused from his sleep by the deafening sound of the hammers breaking down the

[1] It is quite clear that it was not by accident, but by set purpose, that Despréaux makes this misstatement—probably under orders from high quarters—for he must have been well aware that Louis XVII. was released from his solitary confinement full six months earlier. Louis XVIII. knew perfectly the exact date when the deaf-mute was substituted in the Tower for the royal prisoner; he knew also when the new gaoler Lasne arrived on the scene.

bolts and bars of his prison door. He then "adorns the tale" with the most revolting details as to the state of the prince's person and the insanitary condition of his room. In direct contradiction of Barras' statement, Beauchesne proceeds to declare that during the whole interview the child only spoke once.

"I wish to die," were the only words that crossed his lips.

A little further on we find a discrepancy between the dates assigned by Beauchesne and Chantelauze respectively to the cleansing and renovating of Louis XVII.'s apartments under Laurent's direction, while it is really funny to find the latter writer sitting in judgment on certain statements made by Madame Royale, and calmly dismissing them as inaccurate when they do not agree with Despréaux's accounts.[1] It would be rather remarkable if they did, seeing the glaring inaccuracies which leap to light in the latter's so-called history. Alleging that his information is derived from the very lips of both Gagnier and Lienard, Despréaux maintains that the heavily barred and bolted iron door which separated Louis XVII. from all immediate contact with his fellow creatures was still barred and bolted until 1795. Whereas we possess irrefutable evidence that during the summer of 1794 Lienard and Gagnier and all the other Temple officials had free access to the royal prisoner's apartments, and that the latter was seen wandering at will about the grounds and playing games with the municipal guards on the terraces of the Tower.

Beauchesne admits that Louis conceived a real affection for some of the municipals, who were evidently fond of the child, for we hear of them bringing him toys and sweets.

These startling misstatements, however, make no impression on Chantelauze, Despréaux's champion, at any rate he makes no attempt to justify them.

On August 31st, all Paris was startled by a frightful ex-

[1] Eckard in his turn disagrees with his contemporary Despréaux as to the date of the reforms made in the Tower apartments during Laurent's gaolership (see *Mémoires Historiques*, pp. 233, 234).

plosion in the powder mills at Guenelle, in which more than 1500 people were killed.

A report was instantly spread that under cover of the general confusion the royal children had been taken out of the Tower.

Two members of the Convention, André Dumont and Gopilleau de Fonmery, posted down in hot haste to the Temple to reassure themselves as to the safety of their prisoners.

Now here is an incident which furnishes a good example of how Chantelauze champions Despréaux by plastering over the latter's inaccuracies by little inventions of his own. In order to make the date of the unbarring of that famous door coincide with that of the day after the visit of two Conventionnels, Chantelauze quotes the following letter, which he vows that he found amongst the National archives, in Laurent's own writing.

"I have been authorised by the representatives of the people to employ two reliable men to cleanse the walls and remove the vermin from the son of Capet's apartments, the result of gross neglect. The work will be put in hand to-morrow."

Though the most careful search has been made through the folio from which the author declares that he has copied this letter, there is not the slightest trace of any such document.

Chantelauze's shortsightedness in advancing such an argument is remarkable, seeing that, as he himself admits, Dr. Désault began to attend the child on the very day after Barras' visit and that no doctor would allow his patient to remain an hour, much less all those weeks, in such atrociously insanitary surroundings.

Again, as regards the food supplied to Louis XVII. at this period, neither Beauchesne nor Chantelauze report accurately.

Both agree in stating that his meals were meagre in quantity, and coarse and poor in quality. According to them, the prisoner's scanty menu was regulated on the orders issued by the authorities in September 1793, which restricted his supply of food to one dish of vegetables for breakfast, broth,

meat and one other dish for dinner, two dishes of some description for supper.

"No doubt that was enough food to support life," says Beauchesne, "but imagine the kind of plates on which it was served, and the knives and forks with which it was eaten!"

Now as regards that order of September 1793, it is highly improbable, as we have shown elsewhere, that the young king's meals were ever affected by it. The feminine termination of the word *détenues* proved that the directions were restricted to the princesses' table, so that most certainly the order was not meant originally to refer to Louis XVII.'s meals, neither did it, so long as Simon was in the Tower. Possibly the municipal guards may have enforced the regulations when the child was left to their mercy, but when Lienard took over the commissariat of the Temple there was no stint of good fare for any of its inmates.

For in September 1794 Aumont, one of the members of the Convention, writes to remonstrate with Lienard for having spent the National funds too lavishly. Amongst the too costly provisions allowed by Lienard in the Temple, Aumont enumerates eels, pigeons, fowls, ducks, turkeys, mackerel, pike, sturgeon, chocolate, cream, brandy, and other "very expensive delicacies," a large portion of which had been consumed by the employés of the Temple.

The writer goes on to say that considering that a spirit of moderation should characterise every true republican, the members of the Temple staff should be satisfied with an allowance of butcher's meat, vegetables, and wine, and he therefore begs Lienard to regulate their meals accordingly. He concludes his directions by urging him to exercise the greatest economy with regard to the food supplied to the prisoners.[1]

Surely, unless one is blinded by the "huge blinkers of prejudice," there is nothing in this letter to suggest that the royal children were stinted in food either as to quantity or quality. On the contrary, Aumont almost implies

[1] *Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 4393.

that he does not complain of *their* having had the delicacies, by emphasising that the greatest share of all the expensive luxuries had been consumed by the Temple officials. And though he does urge the observance of rigid economy with respect to the food supplied to the prisoners, this is dictated by parsimony, not by the wish to increase the privations of the royalties.

Besides, considering that it was Laurent's great aim to establish Louis XVII.'s convalescence, it is not likely that he would have allowed him to suffer from want of proper nourishment or that the doctors would not have interfered in the matter had there been any cause to do so.[1]

Chantelauze, forsooth, in order to give some colour to his accounts of Spartan black broth served out to the young king, quotes the evidence of one Prousseau de Montlouis, who according to him made constant visits of inspection to the Tower.

Not the slightest trace, however, is forthcoming of the existence of such an individual, much less of his supposed visits !

But to return to Lienard's answer to Aumont's letter. This was a masterpiece of diplomacy. He explains that the consumption of the eels, pike, &c., in the Temple had been authorised by the head of the kitchen department in order to supplement the very meagre allowance of five pounds of butcher's meat per diem to be divided amongst twenty-four persons, this limited amount having been rendered necessary by the prevailing scarcity of meat.

The two prisoners were included in the figures quoted, as is shown by a note attached to the document, but they are not mentioned by name in the body of Lienard's letter.

The latter then proceeds to suggest that further retrenchments should be made in the household economy, some of which he has already indicated. He recommends that the lamps which are lit daily in the Temple, some

[1] As the princess was supplied with wine at all her meals, it is hardly likely that her invalid brother would be deprived of the like indulgence.

of which he has suppressed, should be further reduced to the number of 137, and that the wages of the employés should be cut down.[1] Then Lienard winds up with the most diplomatic stroke of all, by saying that considering how well he is lodged and boarded he feels he ought not to receive so large a salary as 4000 francs. (*Coûte que coûte* Barras' tool No. Two is determined to stick to his post till he has played his part in the Temple comedy.)

That the authorities took Lienard's advice is clear, for a resolution was carried on September 26th by the financial Committee reducing the whole Temple staff to thirteen officials, and directing that the outgoings for food, light, and heating should be reduced in proportion.

This great reduction of the Temple personnel, which on the face of it seemed so transparently simple, was obviously a necessary part of the programme which Laurent had arranged for the execution of his plot.

But throughout all the retrenchments in the Temple expenses, we insist once more in concluding this chapter, that we can find no evidence to substantiate Chantelauze's statement that the young king was condemned under Laurent's care to the "maigre pittance et le brouet noir des spartiates."

[1] *Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 439.

CHAPTER IX

Duhem's denouncement of the Convention—Result of his violent speech—Laurent's diplomacy—Jealousy amongst the officials in the Temple—Laurent reports the malcontents to the authorities.

On September 18th, 1794, Duhem, the son of a bankrupt weaver, mounted the rostrum of the Convention and thence denounced his fellow politicians in a furious speech.

"I ask myself," he shouted, "how we can possibly allow any one professing the slightest sympathy with aristocrats to remain in our number. How can the nation that has been brave enough to send her tyrant to the block, display the culpable weakness of allowing a single offshoot of that tyrant to remain within her bosom and to play the part of heir-presumptive to the throne! Was that how the ancient nations behaved when they had overthrown *their* despots? Did they stop short of destroying them root and stock? Let the various committees follow their example! Let them see to it that not only the whole of the infernal Capet family be *vomited* out of France, but that all their adherents go with them. For at this moment there are, as it were, two distinct nations in France, the royalists and the republicans, and so long as these two parties exist to harass each other, the country will know neither rest nor peace."

In spite of his violent language, Duhem's speech carried no immediate weight with it.

Barras and his fellow Thermidorians, who were still all powerful in the Convention, refused to discuss it, and passed hurriedly to the business of the day.

The proposal to "vomit" Capet's offspring out of France did not smile on Barras at that moment. If Duhem's proposal had found supporters, there would have been an end of all his secret plotting.

Now, however, that the point had once been raised, Barras felt that there was no telling what developments might follow or how rapidly. Events moved very quickly at that time of day.

Therefore Barras realised that it behoved him to precipitate the measures for the young king's evasion as much as possible.

So far, he had been most successful in convincing the members of the various committees that Laurent was an absolutely reliable guardian who could be fearlessly entrusted with the sole charge of the royal children, but how long they would rest contented with his assurance was always a matter of doubt.

As the immediate result of Duhem's intemperate attack, Laurent addressed a most diplomatic letter to the Committee of Public Safety, dated September 19th, 1794.

"Citizen Representatives," it ran, "on the twenty-eighth of July last, the committees of Public Safety and General Security decided to place me in charge of the children of the last tyrant. When General Barras appointed me to my new post, he assured me that you would nominate a colleague on the very next day to share my duties.

"Since that date, however, I have addressed many letters to you explaining the undesirability of leaving me alone and unassisted in this responsible position, but hitherto I have had no answer. Seeing how much attention the Convention is now giving to these children, and seeing also how greatly the royalist party is now in evidence, it is impossible to overrate the necessity for increasing our vigilance in the point of surveillance, and I therefore reiterate my entreaties for the help of a colleague. I *cannot* fulfil the duties of my post single-handed, and I dare to hope that in the interests of the nation, you will no longer overlook my appeal.

"Situated as I now am, *if anything unexpected should happen*, I could not inform you of it myself. I therefore implore you, Citizen representatives, to appoint one or even two

colleagues to share the important charge which you have laid upon me.

"Signed Laurent, Custodian of the children of the tyrant."

Was ever letter more subtly composed? And how much crafty Laurent must have enjoyed writing it!

For did he not know perfectly well that no notice would be taken of his request, whilst in pressing his point so urgently he had protected himself against all possible blame in the event of the king's evasion being discovered. But it is difficult to think of Laurent, whose gentle respectful manners are so warmly praised by Madame Royale, forcing himself to write of poor Louis XVI. as the "tyrant" in his letter to the Convention.

He enlarges so greatly upon the heavy responsibility of his post, he insists so strongly upon the necessity of safeguarding the prisoners, he entreats so urgently for one or two colleagues, that he could not have given clearer proofs of his good faith, or have done more to inspire the authorities with confidence in his zeal.

And behind him all the time was Barras—the General as he was now called—standing at the helm of affairs and ready to guarantee Laurent's reliability through thick and thin.

Full fifty days went by and, as Laurent had foreseen, no notice was taken of his appeal.

But from the day after Duhem's speech, Laurent began in real earnest to hurry on the development of his scheme, taking good care all the time to keep the committees informed of his proceedings, in order to prove his untiring devotion to the republican cause.

With what extraordinary wariness Laurent set about his preparations may be gathered from some of his letters.

For instance, on September 23rd he writes to Aumont, urging in the interests of economy that the body-guard in the Temple should be greatly reduced, and pointing out that thereby a huge retrenchment would be effected in the items of food, lighting, and heating.

"I would guarantee," winds up this "wily one," "that the

present rigorous supervision of the prisoners would be in no way lessened by the diminution of the body-guard."

He goes on to urge that a certain sentry-box in the Temple grounds should be abolished.

"As it is in front of disused stables," he says, "it appears to me entirely superfluous, it not being usual for sentries to mount guard over empty buildings. This should certainly be suppressed."

(No doubt Laurent thought so!)

Further on, he strongly recommends that the detachment of the municipals should remain on duty at the foot of the Tower, as from that position they commanded both the gates as well as the entrance to the Temple, where the most careful supervision was required; but he goes on to ask that the sentinel hitherto stationed in front of the chapel should be dispensed with, because the maintaining of the extra sentry-box involves a considerable outlay in "wood, oil, and candle."

Laurent then further demonstrates that if these reductions in the guards are carried out, the number of men remaining will be so diminished that there will no longer be any necessity to have three superior officers on duty every day. One captain in command would suffice, and the saving of the expenses which were incurred by the daily presence of three staff officers would be immense.

"If these changes could be made," concludes Laurent, "they would effect an enormous economy, not only in the details already enumerated, but also in the number of cards, giving admission to the Tower, which are issued daily to all the officials. A much smaller number of these would be needed and thereby the printer's bill—which is always a heavy item in the year's expenses—would be considerably lessened. Signed Laurent, Commissary of the Committee of Public Safety for the supervision of the Temple."[1]

On September 26th Laurent again writes to the authorities. This time it is to ask that the porter Baron, who was

[1] *Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 4391.

about to be dismissed from the Temple, should be allowed to act as turnkey in the Tower, being in every way a most desirable official, whereas Jerome the present turnkey is given to drink. Unimportant as this little transaction may seem at first sight, it furnishes an additional example of Laurent's foresight. For in saving Baron from being dismissed from the Temple and promoting him to the important post of turnkey in the Tower, he was forging a strong link between himself and his protégé which might stand him in good stead in the future. It is significant that this request is immediately granted, whereas obviously no notice is taken of Laurent's former letter of September 23rd. For on October 3rd he is again pleading the advisability of adopting his suggested retrenchments in the outgoings of the Temple. Most particularly does he urge the suppression of the sentry-box in front of the chapel, which "every one agrees is useless." He declares that the cost for lighting it, let alone the wood and the extra candles required, costs the nation yearly over 2000 francs.

As regards the municipals on duty at the Temple, Laurent harps on a new string, namely the hardships which many of these citizens suffer who are drawn from distant districts. In addition to the physical fatigue entailed by a long walk to and from the Temple, the sacrifice of so much valuable time involves them in serious pecuniary loss. Surely the discharge of their duties might be made easier for these municipals. "In fact," adds Laurent, "all the officers with whom I have discussed this point are of opinion that if the guards were reduced to 100 men, that number would amply suffice to meet all the requirements of the Temple service."

In the end, as we know, Laurent gained his way. The guards were reduced in number, the officers were represented by only one commandant, and all superfluous posts about the Temple were abolished.

But, however warily he may have gone to work, all these changes could not be accomplished without rousing both

suspicions and jealousy amongst the other members of the Temple staff. It was all very fine, the officials declared, to suppress so many posts in the household, but that would in no way ensure the safeguarding of the Tower. Moreover, they took great exception to the liberty of action which Laurent allowed himself. He was constantly absent from the Temple, never giving any explanation of his movements, whilst whether he was in the Tower or not, no one saw anything of the little prisoner. For the brief Indian summer of liberty in which Louis XVII. had revelled after the "winter of his great despair," and during which, under Laurent's care, he had recovered his health and spirits, had come to an abrupt close.

The second floor of the Tower, which during the first months of Laurent's guardianship had been thrown open to all the inmates of the Temple, was reconverted into a barred and bolted prison. And this had all been effected with the swiftness and suddenness of a transformation scene in a pantomime.

Up till that moment the atmosphere of the whole Temple had felt the influence of Laurent's genial presence ; a distinct sense of freedom from restraint had prevailed in all the departments, for there had certainly been a sensible if not openly acknowledged suspension of the close prison regime and a grateful relaxation of its severity. But having gained his first step, namely the restoration of the king's health, as well as the necessary reforms in the economy of the Temple, Laurent proceeded to make this startling change of front.

Hence the great dissatisfaction which was both felt and expressed by all the officials, military and civil alike. The former especially resented the complete isolation to which Laurent had suddenly seen fit to condemn the prisoner, not a single soul being allowed to set eyes on him, but Laurent himself.

Then it was that the commandant, voicing the sentiments of his men, protested angrily that no one knew

whether they were mounting guard "over stones or anything else."[1]

And the rank and file followed suit by dropping very ugly hints anent gaoler Laurent's proceedings.

At length the unconcealed disaffection amongst the Temple staff culminated in open recrimination.

Fortunately for Laurent, however, the malcontents saw fit to make their first complaints to himself. Fortunately, we say, because it afforded him another opportunity of earning a fresh vote of confidence from the authorities. Another might have dismissed the matter with a shrug of his shoulders, but Laurent always knew how to turn a crisis to his own advantage. So he instantly reported the incident to the Committee of Public Safety, and after stating his grievances, he finished his letter by saying, "As there were no further developments—for I considered it was my duty to prevent these—the complainants went quietly downstairs again."[2]

Further developments there were, all the same.

For the matter was not allowed to drop.

Ten days later Laurent's detractors renewed their complaints against him. But this time they were addressed to the members of the Temple Council, at their next Committee meeting, Laurent being present.

We do not know the exact terms in which they couched these complaints—the minutes of that meeting having been destroyed—but that they were again repeated at a further meeting on October 21st we know.

This time Laurent reports as follows to the authorities: "During the sitting of the Temple Council on October 11th, three individuals belonging to the Council lodged calumnious complaints against me. To these I replied with all the frankness of a perfectly clear conscience. At yesterday's meeting they renewed these accusations, and passed a

[1] "On ne savait pas si on gardait des pierres ou autre chose" ("Rapport de l'adjutant de service Walom," *Archives Nationales*, F. 5, 4391).

[2] Lettre de Laurent, October 1st, 1794, *Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 4391.

resolution to the effect that I had forfeited the confidence of the Council, and that this resolution should be laid before your Committees.[1]

"My accusers requested the permission to present the resolution in person. Herewith I declare my readiness to prove that their statements are entirely false and calumnious, and that the individuals who are responsible for them are persons of no character or rather of general ill-repute.

"One of them has been thrice convicted of being a fraudulent bankrupt, whilst another was arrested only three months ago on the charge of using false weights. I may add that no other member of the Committee preferred any complaint against me. Seeing that I never applied for this important post, it would be rather hard if I were dismissed under such humiliating conditions. In the name of the justice which you extend to every citizen, I appeal to you not to pass sentence on me without first hearing my defence. Only listen to that, and then decide whether or not you consider it satisfactory."

(In reading this very temperate and well expressed document, we cannot help contrasting the cobbler Simon with the successor whom Barras selected to fill his place.)

Underlying the whole of this letter there is a distinct tone of self-defence, and an obvious desire to retain his post at any cost. This suggests plainly that, however well Laurent may have succeeded so far in the preliminaries of the evasion, it was evidently not consummated, hence he is in a secret terror lest he should be removed from his post before the accomplishment of his task.

But with such a friend at court as Barras, Laurent was safe enough. No attention was paid to the representations of the three aggrieved officials, and Laurent suffered in no way from the accusations lodged against him.

[1] These were the Committees of Public Safety and General Security.

CHAPTER X

Madame Royale's mysterious visitors—Laurent's critical position at this juncture—Active preparations for Louis XVI.'s evasion—Gomin appointed as joint gaoler—New regulations as to Temple guards—Institution of "Civil Commissioners"—Fresh regulations with respect to the turnkeys—Gomin—His mendacious evidence—The prisoner's loss of speech.

"At one o'clock in the morning on one of the last days of October 1794," writes Madame Royale in her *Mémoires*, "I was awakened by some one knocking at my door. In fear and trembling, I got up to open it. I saw two strange men on the threshold accompanied by Laurent. They both looked very hard at me, and then went away without speaking." [1]

The reason of this visit to the Princess's room in the small hours of the morning has never been explained.

Evidently the "two men" represented the Convention, otherwise Laurent would not have admitted them to the Tower at that time of night. But why did they come?

Many explanations have been suggested and rejected.

Some have conjectured that, as there is good reason for believing that Louis XVII. had been removed from his prison probably a few days (but possibly only some hours) before this unexpected invasion took place, some hint of his disappearance might have found its way into the outside world—in the inconceivable fashion in which rumours of the most carefully concealed proceedings do make wings for themselves—and hence the deputies' unexpected appearance in the Tower. They probably came to assure themselves as to the whereabouts of the prisoners.

Whether they were really deceived by the substitute whom they found in lieu of the young king, or whether their

[1] See *Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Angoulême*, p. 69.

suspicions as to the fraud were converted into a bribed silence by the few authorities who were in the "green room" of the Temple theatre, or whether, on the other hand, they kept their suspicions to themselves, knowing how vain it was to try and incriminate Laurent with his superiors, will never be known.

At any rate, whatever they may have reported to the committees, that report had no outward or visible result so far as Laurent was concerned.

And the explanation of their silence—even if they were not in Barras' confidence—is easy to find. For it will be remembered that in applying so persistently and so vainly to the Convention for the help of a colleague to ensure the safeguarding of the prisoners, Laurent had designedly prepared for himself a strong tower of defence in the event of the young king's disappearance from the Temple. For had he not practically made the Convention responsible for whatever might happen in the Tower—had he not said in all but plain words, "If you won't give me the colleague for whom I ask, your blood must be on your own heads"?

Any way, Laurent's absolute indifference to all the malcontents in the Temple and all the prying inspectors outside it, implied his confidence in Barras' support and protection, a confidence which was probably increased by the fact that at this critical juncture, Barras had just taken his seat on the Committee of General Security. With such a friend in high places, Barras' capable tool had nothing to fear.

How many members of the various committees actually knew of Louis XVII.'s evasion from the Tower, and how far they were initiated into its details, will never be ascertained.

But that the secret *was* shared by some of Barras' colleagues, as well as by Joséphine de Beauharnais and some few other women, is pretty certain.

That any one besides Barras and Laurent and a very few trusted friends knew of the young king's whereabouts *after* he left the Tower is less likely.

But whether the members of the Convention knew much

or little of the comedy that was being played out in the Temple, it seems fairly clear that they all agreed to ignore what was going on within its walls and to leave Laurent free to supply the place of the vanished prisoner as best he might.

According to some accounts, a lay figure was at first substituted for the king,[1] but if so, it could only have been quite a temporary measure, which was adopted in order to allow Louis XVII. to get out of his prison before his living substitute was introduced on to the scene.

As this carefully planned farce must needs culminate in the death of the prisoner, the substitution of a dying child was absolutely necessary in order to attain the desired end.

As, however, such a child was not apparently forthcoming at the moment which appeared most propitious to Louis' evasion, the next best temporary substitute was a deaf-mute. Being unable to betray either himself or his keepers, he was admirably suited to play the part of prisoner in the Tower until replaced in his turn by the moribund child.

Thanks to Laurent's rearranged regime, under which none of the Temple officials were allowed to set eyes on the prisoner, there was no danger of the fraud being detected by them, whilst as to the new colleague, whose tardy appointment had at last been ratified by the Convention, he openly declared that he had never seen the young king at any period of his life.

There is a letter from Laurent, dated November 9th, 1794, which shows that a deaf and dumb child had just taken Louis XVII.'s place in the Tower. And this fact is corroborated by the report made by Harmand after the visit that he made to the Temple in the company of his two colleagues, Reverchon and Mathieu, when they found an undeniably deaf-mute.[2]

The same date, November 9th, also marked the beginning

[1] Some authors believe that it was the lay figure which the deputies discovered on the second floor of the Tower when they paid their surprise visit in the early morning.

[2] See Otto Friedrich's *Brelan d'Adversaires*, p. 25.

of Laurent's third period in the Temple. On that day, Gomin's joint gaolership with Laurent began. Till then, be it noted, he had never set foot in the Temple, and according to evidence derived from the National Archives, he only did so now under violent compulsion.

With Gomin's arrival on the scene, the new regulations with respect to the reorganisation of the Temple guard came into operation.

From this date the Committee of General Safety saw fit to suppress the body of men hitherto appointed by the Council of the Commune for that purpose, and it was further decreed that the members of the supplementary guard whose special duty was to supervise the prisoners in the Tower, should be recruited in future from the civil committees in different quarters of Paris. This was an excellent device for preventing the same municipal from appearing for a second time in the Temple.

Paris was at that time divided into forty-eight quarters, each of which was to furnish six members who were to be designated as Civil Commissioners and to succeed each other in turn in the discharge of their duties as guard of the Tower. The duration of their duties was limited to twenty-four hours.

By this arrangement 288 men would be employed in succession, so that 288 days would elapse before number one would be called upon to return to the Temple for a second time. And since, as a matter of fact, their services were only required for 204 days, 84 of those commissoners never took up their duties at all.

So Laurent could fearlessly permit each deputy to inspect the child in the Temple, for having never seen the original prisoner, none of them detected the trick that was being played on them, any more than their successors would suspect a fraud when the time came for substituting a moribund child for the deaf-mute.

The civil commissioner on duty was lodged on the ground floor for the night, in the same room which served

for Laurent's and Gomin's use during the day. Each time that the commissioner was relieved the new-comer was bound to mount the steps in the Tower and make a visit of inspection to the prisoners in order to certify their presence in the Temple. This was all that was required of the civil commissioners under the new regulations.

To those few who were aware of Louis' evasion, these extraordinary precautions for safeguarding his substitute did not appear all sufficient.

Consequently the deputy-prisoner in the Tower was subjected to a far more rigorous form of imprisonment than had been inflicted on any of the royal captives during their confinement in the Temple.[1] The fact that this remarkable increase of restraint followed upon a period of such comparative freedom as the young king had enjoyed during the beginning of Laurent's gaolership, surely demands some explanation. And the only one that suggests itself to us is to be found in the hypothesis that Louis XVII.'s removal from the second storey of the Tower and the substitution of his "understudy" having been accomplished, Laurent and his confederates took every precaution to prevent the detection of the farce, which had now begun in good earnest in the prisoner's apartments.

It was evidently with this end in view that fresh regulations were made with regard to the turnkeys.

(It will be remembered that Laurent recommended the nomination of Baron to be turnkey at the end of September.)

These regulations had clearly for their object the prevention of all possible communication between the child and any outsider.

The turnkeys who were stationed on the first floor of the Tower were responsible for the opening and shutting of the prison gates, and, until now, had always carried their badge of office on their own person. But now they were no longer allowed to retain the keys in their own possession, lest in the event of both gaolers being absent from the Temple at the

[1] "Embastillement" is the very forcible word used by M. Provins.

same time, the turnkeys might be induced to introduce strangers into the prison. So henceforward the keys were delivered over to Laurent and Gomin's joint custody, and were by them double-locked into a strong cupboard.

This could only be unlocked by the two gaolers *conjointly*.

In this way, Laurent and Gomin were each deprived of any independent authority.

Such a regulation might well cast an aspersion upon Laurent's reliability, seeing that up to that moment the Convention had placed such implicit trust in him as to leave him single-handed in his important post. But apparently Laurent was liberal-minded enough to swallow the insult implied by this proceeding, which he had probably instigated himself! For, of course, this fresh bye-law was made entirely on Gomin's account, and in order to preclude all chance of his being persuaded to admit any official or stranger into the privacy of the second storey during Laurent's temporary absence from the Tower.

All these arrangements being at last complete, Gomin arrived at the Tower, November 9th, 1794. This date also marked the beginning of what we may call the third period of Laurent's sojourn in the Temple.

Gomin was the son of a deceased upholsterer in the Ile St. Louis, and at the time of his appointment to the Temple was living alone in Paris, unmarried, and having no relations except some aunts in one of the distant provinces.

Probably this lack of family ties strongly recommended him to the Convention, because if the need should arise for putting Gomin out of the way, it would be a much easier matter to accomplish if he had no belongings on the spot.

"Having selected the citizen Gomin as joint-gaoler in the Tower," so runs the document still extant in the National Archives, "we instructed the police in his district to acquaint him with our decision. When, however, he appeared before us on the following day, to receive his formal nomination, Gomin excused himself from taking it up. We pointed out

to him, however, that he had no choice in the matter, and must enter on his duties at once.

"'The carriage is waiting to take you to the Temple,' we said.

"Thus coerced, Gomin reluctantly obeyed, but declared himself full of apprehensions with regard to the unexpected duties which had been thrust upon him.

"Signed: Mathieu, Harmand, Reverchon, Barras, Garnier, Rewbell, Montmayon, Bentabole."[1]

Thus, willy-nilly, Gomin was pitchforked into the Temple to share in guarding the prisoner, who was no longer Louis XVII.[2]

"Have you ever seen the young prince?" Laurent inquired, meeting his new colleague in the antechamber to the prisoner's apartments.

"Never in my life," was the answer, which we beg our readers to note; because, when undergoing cross-examination in court in 1837, we find Gomin deposing that he felt all the more confident as to Louis XVII.'s identity with the child who died in the Temple, having when attached to a battalion of National Guards often seen the son of Louis XVI. playing in the Tuileries garden!

But to return to the meeting of the two colleagues in the Tower.

"In that case," Laurent replied, "the prince will most certainly not speak to you, for he hardly ever opens his mouth now," he added, by way of preparing Gomin for the care of an absolutely dumb child. From that moment, Laurent patented a most outrageously audacious lie—a veritable "truth-crusher," to borrow a transatlantic term—which he diligently put in circulation.

For he solemnly declared to all those who were not in a position to know any better, that ever since that shameful night in October (a whole twelvemonth before) when Louis

[1] *Arch. Nat.*, F. 7, 4392.

[2] It is noteworthy that Gomin's arrival in the Tower exactly synchronised with Barras' acquisition of the entire control of the prisons.

XVII. was forced to sign the iniquitous paper incriminating the Queen, the child had resolutely refused to open his lips, never having recovered from the shock of that cruel ordeal.

Considering that during his recent convalescence Louis XVII. had talked freely and happily with at least fifty different people, one marvels how such a preposterous lie could have found credence with any one.

And yet the little prisoner's speechlessness was duly certified, not only by the doctors who replaced Naudin and Thierry, but also by an official report made to the General Council of the Commune, whilst it was further established by three leading "Conventionnels"—Harmand, Mathieu, and Reverchon.

Sworn allies of Barras, all three!

CHAPTER XI

Visit of the three "Conventionnels" to the prisoner in the Tower—Harmand's description of the visit—Remarkable behaviour of the prisoner—A secret committee—Reflections on Harmand's account of the prisoner—Louis Blanc's remarks with regard to the speechlessness of the prisoner—Harmand's *Mémoires*.

It was on December 19th, 1794 (some say January 3rd, 1795), that the three "Conventionnels" paid their long visit of inspection to the prisoner in the Tower, for the purpose, no doubt, of discounting any rumours as to the king's disappearance, which, as they foresaw, were bound to get abroad before long.

For two mortal hours, Harmand, who was spokesman for the deputation, vainly tried to extract a word from the child, whose attendants, like well-trained parrots, repeated Laurent's mendacious explanation of his strange dumbness.

Chantelauze gives Harmand's description of the interview as follows:—

"The prince was seated at a little table littered over with cards, some of which had been folded into the shape of boxes, whilst with the others he was building castles, &c. He did not interrupt his playing on our entrance.

"He was wearing a *new* sailor suit of slate-coloured cloth, his head was bare, his room was clean and very well lighted. He had a low wooden bed without curtains, but the sheets looked fine and good. His bed was on the left as you entered the room, placed behind the door. Lower down on the same side was another bedstead, without any bedding, which had been used by Simon, and placed there by order of the committee before Robespierre's death.

"I approached the prince, who took no notice of us, and told him that the authorities had sent us to see him, because they heard that he had declined to answer any questions

respecting his health, that he had refused to see a doctor, and that he could not be persuaded to take any exercise. We had therefore come to inquire into these matters and ascertain the truth. I assured him that we had the kindest intentions, but that if he persisted in his obstinate silence, we should be forced to rebuke him, whereas if he would only say what he would like to have, we were authorised to gratify his wishes as far as possible. The whole time that I was addressing him, the child looked fixedly at me, without stirring, apparently listening attentively to every word, but without attempting to make any answer.

"I repeated all I had said over again.

"'Perhaps,' I said, 'you did not understand that I have the honour to ask you if you would like to have a dog or a bird or any kind of toy? Or would you prefer to have some playfellows of your own age? If so, we would bring some here for you to see before leaving them with you. Or suppose you went out now into the garden or on to the terrace.'

"No answer.

"'Would you like any bonbons or cake or fruit?' I then inquired.

"In short, I suggested every imaginable thing likely to tempt a child of his age, but without provoking a single answer, not even a gesture.

"'Monsieur,' I said in a severer tone, 'such obstinacy at your age is reprehensible, and the more so as we are here on purpose to offer you every possible alleviation for your bad health and are willing to gratify any wish you may express. But how can we, if you refuse to speak? If my manner displeases you, say so, and I will try and alter it to your satisfaction.'

"Still the same fixed stare, the same apparent attention, and the same resolute silence.

"Returning to the charge, I said, 'Monsieur, I must point out to you that much as we should regret your stubbornness, we would bear with it, if it only hurt yourself, but you must

remember that others suffer from it. For you must understand that you don't belong to yourself, but to those who are responsible for your welfare. Try and realise how awkward we must feel having been sent here by the authorities to learn your wishes, if we have nothing to report to them. I therefore beg you to answer my questions, or you will oblige me to be severe.'

"Still not a word, only the same steady stare. My colleagues and I were really in despair. There was something so weird in the child's look of mingled indifference and endurance which seemed to say, 'Do as you please; put an end to me if you like.'

"By way of trying the effect of severity, I assumed an imperious tone, and, placing myself directly in front of the prince, I said, 'Give me your right hand, please.' He did so, and passing my hand up his arm as far as the shoulder, I detected a swelling on his wrist and one on his elbow. I doubt if they were painful, for the prince never winced.

"'Now the other hand, sir,' I said; there was nothing wrong there.

"'And now, sir, let me touch your knees and legs.'

"He stood up, and I found similar swellings on each knee, just above the calf. In that position, the child appeared malformed and scrofulous. His legs and thighs were long and attenuated, his arms were very thin, his chest was too prominent, his shoulders high and contracted. His head was very handsome, his complexion clear though pale, his beautiful long hair was a bright chestnut colour and very well kept.

"'Now, sir,' I said, 'be good enough to walk.'

"Thereupon he crossed the room towards the door, on either side of which the beds were placed.

"'Do you call that taking exercise?' I asked. 'Don't you know that you are ill because you won't go out of doors and take proper walks? You must believe us, for we only want to make you well, and so we shall send a doctor to see you, and you must answer his questions. Now make some sign to show that you won't mind seeing him.'

"I could extract neither sign nor sound.

"'Sir,' I urged, 'get up again and take a longer walk this time.' But he paid not the slightest heed to my words, and remained seated with his elbows on the table.

"The expression of his face was absolutely blank, and you would have supposed from his general behaviour that he believed himself to be alone in the room and had not heard a word of what had been said. My colleagues did not address him, but we exchanged looks of utter astonishment. We were just leaving the room for a private consultation outside the door, when the child's dinner was brought up.

"It consisted of some black soup with a few lentils floating in it, and was served in a common red earthenware bowl, whilst on three plates of the same ware were respectively a small slice of very dry, tough-looking meat, a helping of lentils, and six chestnuts, which were burnt rather than roasted. There was no knife on the tray, only a pewter spoon and fork, neither of which looked over-clean. There was no wine.

"This meal, so the officials assured us, was served in accordance with the orders they had received from the Council of the Commune.

"Directly we were out of the room, we directed that this abominable state of things should be rectified at once, and that more delicacies, specially fruit, should be added to the child's meals. I desired that they should procure some grapes for him at once—though they were rather scarce just then—and having given these instructions we returned to the prince's room.

"Meanwhile, he had cleared every plate. I asked him if he had liked his dinner, to which he made no answer, neither did he reply when I inquired if he would like some grapes.

"A few minutes later, however, when the grapes were brought and placed on the table, he pounced on them and devoured them all. I asked him if he would like some more, but he made no answer.

"By this time we felt convinced that it was useless to try

any further to make him speak, and I told him so, adding that we were very sorry that he would not make friends with us, but that we should ask the authorities to send other visitors next time, who perhaps he would like better. Upon this, still speechless, he stared vacantly at me.

"'Would you like us to go away now?' I asked. Again no answer.

"Therewith we left the room, and having carefully closed the door behind us, we remained in the antechamber for a quarter of an hour, exchanging our views as to the prince's extraordinary condition, both mental and physical.

"Though the officials had already given me their own explanation of the child's stubborn behaviour, I begged them to repeat it in the anteroom, asking them if this obstinate silence did indeed date from the evening when the prince was forced to sign the odious and senseless accusation against his mother. Thereupon they solemnly protested that ever since the evening in question the prisoner had never opened his mouth. But is it credible that a child of nine years old could display such extraordinary persistency? Utterly improbable as it appears, I maintain that my evidence is absolutely true, and that I can furnish witnesses and adduce facts to prove its accuracy. I cannot say whether the prince spoke to Dr. Désault or not, because a few days after my visit to the Temple, the Convention was induced to give me an appointment in the East Indies.[1] Consequently I left for Brest, where I remained for several months. On my return, I learnt that both the patient and doctor were dead. The latter left neither notes nor memorandum referring to the prisoner. At least, so I was told.

"Be that as it may, before leaving the antechamber in the Tower, my colleagues and I resolved, for the sake of the nation, who knew nothing of the child's condition, for the honour of the authorities, who were equally ignorant on the same point, but who must of course be enlightened,

[1] As a matter of fact, this grand-sounding appointment to the East Indies resolved itself really into a stay at Brest of six weeks' duration.

and lastly, to save the reputation of the guilty municipal corporation, *who did know* and were responsible for this disgraceful state of affairs, we would make no public report, but would call a secret committee before whom we would lay our statements, which should not transpire beyond that committee. This was accordingly done."

Now it is intensely interesting and not a little significant to find that that secret committee consisted of the three "Conventionnels" aforesaid and—Barras!

"Truly," as M. Provins drily remarks, "they understood the art of washing their dirty linen 'en famille.'"

The account of these proceedings affords ample food for speculation. In the able chapter[1] which deals with this remarkable visit of inspection, M. Provins has taken infinite pains to emphasise certain salient features in Harmand's account of his interview with the prisoner, because they afford distinct points of contrast with the details furnished by Barras himself of *his* visit to the child in the Tower.

For instance, Harmand's snapshot of the moody boy who, though he was up and playing at his table, took not the slightest notice of his entrance, compares strangely with Barras' description of the sick child who, though he was surprised in the early hours of the morning, promptly shook off his drowsiness and replied to Barras' questions.

Then again, Harmand describes the boy's sailor suit as *new*. Now the sailor suit ordered for the little king and made early in August was worn by him every day (for there is no notice of a second suit being supplied to him), therefore after a good five months' wear it is hardly likely to have struck Harmand as *new*. This is no doubt a very trivial inaccuracy, but still it is not too trivial to be worth mentioning—"trifles make the sum of life."

As regards the speechlessness of the prisoner, M. Provins quotes Louis Blanc's remarks, which, coming from a strictly impartial pen, are specially valuable.

"Who in their sane senses," asks M. Blanc, "would

[1] *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. i. ch. v.

believe that a sickly child of nine could possibly sustain such a part, even if he *had* formed the resolution never to speak again for the rest of his life? Why, in the case of a strong grown-up man such a remarkable display of determination would be most unusual."

It is equally ridiculous to suppose that the child did suffer such an agony of remorse after signing that notorious statement. On the contrary, all the evidence tends to show that he had only the vaguest idea of what the paper contained, which the vile Hébert was to use as a deadly weapon against Marie Antoinette, for we know that the greatest pains were taken to keep him in ignorance of his mother's death.

But as the fact remains that when Harmand visited the prisoner in the Tower, he found a child who from his own showing was obviously a deaf-mute, the explanation of this circumstance is still to seek. Those, who refute the theory of the king's evasion from the Tower and the substitution of another child in his place, have never been able to furnish any solution to the riddle of the dumb boy, whose presence in the prison no less than three "Conventionnels" certified. The fact that the child complied with Harmand's order to put out his hand,[1] to stand up, and to walk across the room, in no way discounts the theory that he was a deaf-mute. No doubt Harmand accompanied his directions with involuntary gestures, such as all deaf and dumb children are trained to understand. Probably when Harmand said "stand up," he stood up himself, and when he bade him put out his hand, he extended his own, just as we instinctively do when talking to an infant. Moreover, seeing that both Laurent and Gomin were present, they may have made signs familiar to the child.

[1] In describing the swellings on the boy's wrist and elbow, Harmand reports them to be on the right arm, whereas in the report of the post-mortem made on the prisoner who died in the Tower, the tumours are stated to have been found on the *left* arm. Why has this discrepancy never been pointed out?

When, however, the boy was bidden to "make some sign" he relapsed into his former irresponsiveness, simply because no special gesture exists for conveying such an order to a deaf-mute.

It is certainly true, as Chantelauze points out, that when Barras told the young king to get up he made no attempt to do so, and Barras therefore directed the officials to set him on his feet, but it was so evident that the exertion caused suffering to the child, that the experiment was instantly abandoned.

Again, is it likely that Louis XVII., who was universally allowed to be of a most grateful disposition, would have behaved so ungraciously to Harmand, when he was really trying to afford him relief and enjoyment? Obviously not!

The child interviewed by the "Conventionnels" was undoubtedly a deaf-mute, one who was physically deprived of the gift of speech and who was not exercising the abnormal self-restraint that those writers would have us believe, who insist on their unreasonable theory merely as a means to an end.

Finally, with regard to the report of this visit, supposed to have been made by Harmand in "secret committee," it is noteworthy that no trace of any such document is to be found in any of the National Archives.

Of course not, for probably Harmand never made one! How could he do so without stating either that Louis XVII. had been suddenly struck dumb, or that he had been spirited out of the Temple?

No doubt these considerations weighed with him and his colleagues, and induced them to adopt the extraordinary measure of suppressing all public report of their experiences in the Tower.

Later on, however, when the Bourbons had returned to France, Harmand did see fit to publish an account of his interview with the child in the Temple, and his motive for doing so is obvious. Harmand, having been one of those regicides who voted for Louis XVI.'s death, was most anxious

to curry favour with the restored monarchy. Hence his officious zeal in publishing the details of his visit to the Tower, for he was well aware that in giving publicity to what he knew well had been only one act in a complicated comedy, he could not fail to propitiate Louis XVIII.[1] And he guessed rightly. After this proof of his servile submission to the usurper, Harmand was allowed to end his days immune from all worry and suspicion.

The space at our disposal does not permit us to follow all the able and well-weighed arguments which M. Provins advances in support of the substitution theory—on which we shall have much to say later—but those of our readers who are anxious for further details would do well to consult *Le Dernier Roi Légitime de France.*

We will only add that though there has been considerable discussion as to whether it was Harmand or Mathieu who played the part of spokesman during the "Conventionnels'" visit to the Tower, the facts reported by Harmand have never been disputed. They were too widely known and were attested by too many eye-witnesses to admit of any contradiction.[2]

[1] The dedication which Harmand placed at the head of his *Souvenirs* is abject and fawning to a sickening degree. "The dawn of a better and brighter day is now breaking over France, and under its tutelary auspices I venture to publish these anecdotes. The magnanimity of our monarch offers a strong guarantee that the past will be forgotten."

[2] Mathieu, who, after the first "insurrection de Prairial" (May 20th, 1795), became President of the Convention, also left Paris whilst the little prisoner in the Temple was dying, and spent the summer of 1795 in Bretagne, where the Convention gave him a post as Commissary.

We are in the dark as to Reverchon's movements after his visit to the Tower, but M. Gruau de la Barre deposes to having read a letter bearing a stamp of that period, in which Reverchon, writing to a friend at Lyons, declares that in December 1794 Louis XVII. was no longer to be found in his prison.

See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime de France,* pp. 193, 194.

CHAPTER XII

Laurent's resignation and departure from the Temple—His subsequent movements—His death—Thin ice—Cambacérès' able speech—Attitude of foreign courts with regard to France—Strained relations between France and Spain—The King of Spain claims the custody of Louis XVI.'s children—Moribund child as second substitute for Louis XVII. in the Tower—Laurent's letters—Proof of the genuineness of those letters—Mrs. Atkyns' letters—Cormier's assurances—Mrs. Atkyns' singular foresight—Communication between the Convention and the Comte de Provence.

SOME three months after the "Conventionnels'" visit to the Tower, Laurent begged to be relieved of his post as gaoler to the royal children, and quitted the Temple on March 29th, 1795.

His resignation caused unbounded surprise; no one could understand how he could part from the child, on whom he had lavished such devoted care, and at the same time relinquish such an exceptionally good post.

M. de Beauchesne states that owing to his mother's death at that time, Laurent's presence was required in San Domingo to settle family business. But if Laurent did furnish this explanation, it was clearly faked. For after leaving the Temple, he remained several months in Paris, only quitting it after the Directoire was formed and when Barras was in a position to give him an excellent appointment in the East Indies.

Consequently when Laurent did return to his native island it was in an official capacity as secretary to M. Pierre Leblanc, the deputy-governor of the Windward Isles.

There are many letters extant in the Archives de la Marine in both Laurent's and Barras' handwriting, which prove their official relations. It is moreover significant to find Barras recommending Laurent for the post on the ground that he had already rendered *very important* services

to the State, "*in the discharge of which he had always displayed much zeal and intelligence.*"

What were those important services?

Apart from Laurent's services in the Temple, we find no trace of any other.

It is also curious to note as a further instance of the inaccuracy with which every circumstance and incident connected in any way with Louis XVII. was distorted and misrepresented, that in 1817, Comte d'Anglès, the then Prefect of Police, writes to Descazes, describing Laurent as a republican, who took no interest in the fate of his prisoner, adding that "he left France loaded with curses in General Leclerc's suite, and died at San Domingo."

Poor Laurent! he would have been the first to laugh at this grotesque statement.

For, as a matter of fact, he left France fervently blessed by Louis XVII. for having saved his life, and obviously under Barras' and his colleagues' protection. He neither followed General Leclerc nor did he die at San Domingo. His death took place at Cayenne, August 20th, 1807, where, in addition to discharging the duties connected with his appointment to the Admiralty, he was filling the very honourable post of secretary to Victor Hugues, governor of the colony.

But however perplexing Laurent's resignation may have appeared to those who looked on, considered in the light of after events it appears very easy of comprehension.

There can be no doubt that in resigning his post at the Temple, Laurent was actuated by a strong sense of self-preservation. He had accomplished the task that Barras had set him, namely, the removal of Louis XVII. from the second storey of the Tower, and the child was now hidden away in one of the disused garrets immediately under the roof of the Tower.

Up till now Laurent had supplied all his wants, and before leaving the Temple, he delegated that care to another official, of whom we shall speak later on. It was necessary

to keep the young king in his hiding-place until a favourable opportunity occurred for taking him out of the Temple; but as that opportunity tarried, Laurent considered that, having fulfilled his original undertaking to the letter, he was dispensed from taking any further trouble in the matter. He was well aware that he was treading on very thin ice, and that the sooner he severed his connection with the Temple, the better for him.

In those days no single individual, however important or however insignificant, could enjoy any sense of security from hour to hour. Besides, the fact that Barras, Harmand, and Letournim (all leading "Conventionnels") had left Paris early in March on a feigned expedition to the East Indies, must have weighed greatly with Laurent at this crisis. If by any chance the king's evasion should become known, what hope of security could he entertain, with his fellow-conspirators beyond the seas? And that this discovery might occur at any moment was only too possible. Already on three occasions during the last few months, Laurent had trembled for the safety of his secret.

First came the disaffection among the Temple officials, which led to their openly accusing Laurent of irregular conduct in the discharge of his duties; then followed a very "mauvais quart d'heure" for all the conspirators, when the republican Lequino, following Duhem's lead of some months back, loudly demanded that the Government should purge the French soil of every vestige of royalty. He was silenced, however, by Cambacérès' able argument deprecating the expulsion of the Capets from France.

"An enemy," he said, "whom we retain in our own power is far less dangerous to ourselves than when he is in the possession of his supporters. Once let Capet fall into the hands of the royalists and you will hear of him, wherever our troops may be called upon to fight. Even if he should die, he would still be ubiquitous and still serve as a fetish to encourage hope in the breast of all French traitors to our country. Hence the danger which would accrue to

the State from expelling these members of Capet's family from France would be far greater than those of retaining them in prison. The banishment of tyrants has almost always paved the way to their restoration. If Rome had retained the Tarquins within her walls, she would have had no need to fight them!"[1]

The third and last fright sustained by Laurent was caused by the "Conventionnels'" visit to the Temple. This might have had very awkward consequences for all those concerned in the substitution of the deaf-mute.

So, all things considered, although the plot had hitherto escaped detection, it was highly desirable to have done with it as soon as possible, more especially as the exigencies of foreign politics rendered the realisation of Barras' scheme more necessary than ever in that ambitious individual's eyes.

For several months past, the foreign courts had been seeking to resume their relations with France, whilst the Committee of Public Safety was equally anxious to arrive at some pacific understanding with, at any rate, some of the continental powers.

Relations with Spain were at that moment the most strained. For Spain, like La Vendée, had kept her eyes steadily fixed on the Temple where the cousins of her king were still held in captivity. But the Convention had passed a resolution refusing to entertain any overtures of peace with Spain until France had received satisfaction for the capitulation of Colliouze.

Nevertheless, as the Commune was anxious to withdraw the troops from Spanish soil in order to use them elsewhere, some preliminary *pourparlers* were at length begun.

When, however, in 1794, the King of Spain intimated that he should demand the custody of Louis XVI.'s children as the first condition of peace, Cambacérès, as head of the Committee of Public Safety, sent the following reply:

"The only intercourse possible between republicans and slaves is that conducted by cannon and sword."

[1] *Séance de la Convention*, January 22nd, 1795.

MONSIEUR GRAU DE LA BARRE

A more polite but equally decided answer was returned by the Committee at the end of January, when Spain again claimed the possession of the royal prisoners. It was precisely at this juncture that Cambacérès made his remarkable speech, urging the retention of the Capets on French soil, declaring that even *after his death* the little Capet might prove a disturbing element.

"It was exactly the kind of speech," says Louis Blanc, "that might be expected from a man who knew all the time that he was speaking that the evasion had been accomplished."

Be that as it may, it was clear to all concerned that no time was to be lost in substituting a dying child for the deaf and dumb one in the Tower.

It was necessary, however, that the second substitute should be either an orphan or the child of such obscure parents that if it should be advisable to hasten his death by foul means, no awkward inquiries on the part of relations would be likely to ensue. Accordingly, a moribund child, bearing a faint resemblance to the king, had been selected from one of the hospitals as substitute number two. There is no doubt that Laurent superintended these transactions, if we may trust certain letters written by him, which M. Gruau quotes in his valuable work, *L'Abrégé de l'Histoire des Infortunes du Dauphin.*

Here is the first letter, written undoubtedly to Barras.

"Mon Général,[1]—Your letter of the 6th inst. reached me too late, for the first part of our plan had already been accomplished, it being impossible to delay any longer. His new gaoler comes to-morrow, Cosmier by name"—for this read Gomin, say the editors. "A respectable man, so Mr. B—— says, but I haven't much faith in these fellows and shall look after him, so you may be easy. The 'assassins' have been cleared out and the new municipals will never imagine that the dumb child has taken the king's place. Now it remains

[1] "I am convinced," says M. Otto Friedrichs, "that these letters are addressed to Barras, and equally convinced that 'B——' stands for Bottot, who was Barras' private secretary."

to get him out of the d—— tower. B—— says he can do nothing in the matter owing to the strict supervision. If it were likely to go on for some time, I should be very anxious for the boy's health, for he has hardly any air in his hiding-place, where only God Almighty could discover him! He has promised me to die rather than betray himself, and I have good reason for trusting him. His sister knows nothing of all this, so I have to tell her about the dumb child as if he were her brother. This poor little creature is quite happy, and all unwittingly plays his part so well that the new guards fully believe that he doesn't speak because he won't. So there is no danger to be apprehended from him.

"Send back the faithful bearer soon for I want your help, and follow the advice which he brings you by word of mouth for it is the only way to ensure our success.

"Laurent. Tower of the Temple, November 7th, 1794."

This is the second letter.

"Mon Général,—I have just received your letter. Alas! your request is impossible. It was easy enough to get our victim upstairs, but to get him down is absolutely beyond me, the supervision is so extraordinarily strict. As you know, the Committee of Public Safety sent those monsters Mathieu and Reverchon accompanied by Harmand to certify that the deaf-mute is the son of Louis XVI. My General, what is the meaning of this farce? I am quite at a loss and altogether unable to understand B——'s conduct. Now he talks of sending the dumb child away, and putting a sick one in his place. Have you heard of this and is it meant for a pitfall? General, I'm very anxious about several things. The greatest care is taken to prevent any one from entering the deaf-mute's prison, so that the substitution may not be discovered, for anybody examining the child would very soon detect that he was born deaf and is consequently dumb.

"But what will happen if another child is put in his place, for a sick child will talk, and then our 'half-saved one' ('notre demi-sauvé') will be sacrificed.

"Send me an answer as soon as possible by our faithful bearer with your opinion in writing.

"Laurent. Tower of the Temple, February 5th, 1795."

Here is the third letter.

"Mon Général,—Our deaf-mute has been happily transferred to the Temple Palace and well hidden there. He will remain in the Palace, as in case of danger, he will be mistaken for the Dauphin. This triumph is entirely due to you, my General. Now I am quite easy, only give your orders for the future, and I will obey them.

"Lasne can take my place when he likes. The most efficacious measures have been taken to secure the Dauphin's safety. Consequently I shall now be with you in a few days, and shall be able to tell you the rest viva voce.

"Laurent. The Tower of the Temple, March 3rd, 1795."

These three letters were published for the first time by M. Bourbon Leblanc under the signature of "Laur" in his work entitled *Le Véritable Duc de Normandie.*

In publishing these letters, M. Bourbon Leblanc says, "read these three letters which have been preserved in trustworthy archives and which the Tribunals will appreciate."

"So far," says M. Gruau, "we have failed to discover the originals of these letters."

But it is quite possible and even probable that they were amongst the 202 papers which were stolen from the "Pretender" when he instituted his lawsuit against the Duchesse d'Angoulême, June 15th, 1836.

One point respecting these letters is beyond all doubt—they were not inventions.

"It is quite certain," says M. Otto Friedrichs, "that Laurent's letters could not have been fabricated, because they contain certain facts, which could not possibly have been known to any one else at the time when the supposed inventions must have been written, and which only in comparatively recent times have been proved to be perfectly correct."

Added weight has been given to Laurent's letters in recent years by the discovery in 1904 of certain papers which had lain hidden in the cellars of a solicitor's house in Paris.

In these letters—written by a Mrs. Atkyns—not only does the fervent royalist confirm the possibility of certain facts (not known to the "common herd" at that time of day, and which careful study of the archives proves to have been well authenticated), but Mrs. Atkyns brings to light the two parallel lines of action pursued respectively and concurrently by certain members of the Convention on the one hand and by certain royalists on the other: each having the same goal in view, namely, the rescue of the little king from the Temple. The royalists spilt their money like water in their endeavours; the "Conventionnels" were lavish in their promises of help, whilst all the time they diligently hoodwinked the royalists, their only object being to get possession of the child as a valuable hostage, who once in their own hands would serve as a protector not only against Louis XVIII. but also against Louis XVII. himself!

Mrs. Atkyns had formerly known Marie Antoinette at Versailles, and like so many others had been fascinated by her kindness and never forgot it. So that when the Queen was confined in the Conciergerie awaiting her execution, Mrs. Atkyns forced her way into the prison, in the vain hope of being able to help her royal friend in some way.

Finding that it was impossible, she then solemnly pledged herself to the Queen to spend her life and all her worldly possessions in seeking to rescue the little king.

During 1794 and 1795, she kept up a brisk correspondence with one of her agents in Paris, Cormier by name.

And these were the letters which were collected by her on her deathbed and sent to her solicitor's office in Paris.

She died just at the time that Louis XVIII. was re-entering Paris in the July of 1815.

"M. Sardou," says M. Provins, "had been so much struck by Mrs. Atkyns' share in the evasion, that he engaged

M. Barbey, a young historian and one of my friends, to trace Mrs. Atkyns' papers. At that time no one knew where they had been lodged.

"M. Barbey set out for London, fully bent on discovering them. But there he learnt that Mrs. Atkyns had died in Paris, where in due time her letters were found."

From them, it is quite clear that she took a most active part in all the preparations for the king's evasion, and it is curious how her letters confirm the authenticity of the documents which we have already quoted as having been written by Laurent. The affinity—so to speak—between Mrs Atkyns' letters and Laurent's is extremely interesting, because neither had the writers ever seen each other, nor had the respective recipients of these letters any knowledge of one another. Yet it is perfectly marvellous how the facts recorded by each writer harmonise, and as it were complete those found in the other letters.

In 1794, though Mrs. Atkyns was at that time in England, we find her representing the life and soul of the many French refugees whose thoughts were all centred on the Tower of the Temple.

The letters that reached her at that time from her agent Cormier prove that as early as the 24th and 25th of March, a scheme was well advanced for the removal of Louis XVII. from his prison.

How far this plot coincided with those which were being engineered by Barras, Tallien, and a group of women living together at the Convent of the Carmelites, it is difficult to say.

Though one cannot speak with any certainty on this particular point, yet judging from the developments which followed the night of Barras' triumph of the ninth of Thermidor, it is quite possible that even at that early period Robespierre's enemies were already in the receipt of Mrs. Atkyns' money.

At any rate, writing in 1794, Cormier says, "Make your mind quite easy. They fancy that they are working for

their own ends, but they are really playing into our hands and we shall get possession of him fast enough."

Again in a later letter—October 8th—written just as Barras and Harmand had secured their posts in the Committee of General Safety, Cormier informs Mrs. Atkyns that a fresh plot is in the air, but that nothing is definitely settled. What was that plot?

In a letter dated June 3rd, 1795—eight months later—Mrs. Atkyns alludes to this scheme, which was the precise one which forty years later was found to have been sketched out by Laurent in one of his three letters.

"I am very much opposed," writes this high-principled woman, "to the plan of substituting another child for the king. Because as I pointed out to my friends the other day, such a proceeding might lead to the most disastrous results. The party in power after having pocketed the money and removed the Prince are quite capable of declaring that, after all, he never left the Temple."

Was there ever a clearer instance of prevision?

Mrs. Atkyns foresaw exactly what did happen, and when Cormier was simple enough to write to her "they fancy they are working for their own ends," &c., he had never realised the immense importance which Barras and his colleagues attached to the possession of the little king.

On October 31st, a few days after Madame Royale had been disturbed by her mysterious midnight visitors, Cormier writes to Mrs. Atkyns, "I think I may safely assure you that *the master and his property are practically saved.* Not that the rescue will be actually accomplished either to-day, or to-morrow or the next day, possibly not even within a month. But I never felt more confident about its ultimate success."

A few days later Cormier makes practically the same statement in a letter to the Chevalier Louis de Frotté, who was also desperately anxious as to the success of the enterprise with which he so generously identified himself.

This letter is in substance only a counterpart of the first of Laurent's three letters.

The one to which we allude was written by Laurent on November 7th. Its matter agrees entirely with that of Cormier's letters, while the one written by him on June 3rd affords a clear proof that the agents of the Convention, who were all the time fattening on Mrs. Atkyns' money, were still successfully hoodwinking Cormier and leading him to believe that he and they were working for the common object, and were actuated by exactly the same motives.

It was only months later that Cormier realised how much farther-sighted Mrs. Atkyns had been than himself, and perceived that after all he had really been allowed no share and no knowledge of the final workings of the plot.

Mrs. Atkyns had guessed—before he had even suspected it—that though the little king *had* been removed from the Temple, he had been seized by their opponents, and that the royalists had come no nearer to possessing the royal quarry for themselves. She realised likewise that these creatures of the Directoire were in close and constant communication with the Comte de Provence.

"At the time," continues M. Provins, "when Jules Favres was pleading his suit in the 'Cours D'Appel' of 1874, Mrs. Atkyns' letters had not been discovered ; had they been produced in Court *then*, they would have commanded the greatest consideration, for as I have already said they serve to establish the authenticity of Laurent's letters, the originals of which are unfortunately not to be traced."

Mrs. Atkyns' letters are therefore invaluable because they treat categorically of the three salient points in this stage of our case :—

(*a*) The necessity for reforms in the administration of the Temple regime after the famous Ninth of Thermidor.

(*b*) The substitution of the children in the Tower for Louis XVII.

(*c*) The forging of the civil acts, whereby history was falsified.

CHAPTER XIII

Gomin's complicity in the plot for evasion—Lasne the new gaoler—His mendacious statements—Beauchesne's accounts of the dying child in the Temple—Lasne's deposition with regard to the prisoner in the Tower—"Little Capet is indisposed"—Dr. Désault called in—Story of the prisoner and his medicine—Dr. Désault's attitude to his patient in the Tower—Désault drops a dangerous hint—Signs his own death warrant—The doctor's tragic end—Deposition made by Désault's niece—Extract from the sculptor Daragon's letter—Dr. Abeille's statement with regard to Désault's death—M. Lair's evidence as to the survival of Louis XVII.—Disappearance of Désault's formal report from National Archives—Mysterious death of Doctor Choppart—A third life sacrificed to the "Private Theatricals" in the Temple.

THERE is no doubt that Gomin was admitted into the secret of the plot for the king's evasion, but he probably took no active share in the affair. For at that time he had been relieved of his services on the second floor of the Tower and had been given the sole charge of Madame Royale, with whom he became a great favourite.[1] Consequently after Laurent's departure, Lasne, his successor, who was totally ignorant of the real condition of things, was practically left single-handed to take charge of the little prisoner.

As had been the case with Gomin, Lasne was pitchforked into the Temple, knowing nothing of the jugglery which had spirited away the real Louis XVII. out of the Tower and had left only an unconscious impostor in his place. But whereas in time the truth was undoubtedly revealed to Gomin, it seems almost certain that Lasne

[1] Madame Royale became so attached to Gomin, that when she was released from the Temple she begged that he might accompany her to the Austrian border, which was permitted. Later, as the Duchess of Angoulême, she secured the post of concierge at the Castle of Meudon for Gomin, who remained her pensioner for his life. Hence his false deposition, with regard to Louis XVII.'s identity, when he was called upon in later years to swear to the young king's death in the Temple.

was never taken behind the scenes of the Temple tragi-comedy.

The new gaoler entered on his duties on March 31st, 1795, and whilst every facility had been given to Laurent to resign his post, Lasne was forced to take his place almost against his will.

According to Beauchesne and Chantelauze, Lasne had no difficulty in recognising the prisoner in the Tower as Louis XVII., "having often seen the Dauphin playing in the garden in the Tuileries, when he was on duty in the 'Gardes français.'"

Now considering that Lasne's services in the "Gardes" terminated on May 11th, 1782, and that Charles-Louis, Duc de Normandie, was not born until March 27th, 1785, this gallant soldier must have been vouchsafed a special prevision of the Dauphin three years before he was born!

Even if it were possible to find a shadow of an excuse for this monstrous lie, by charitably supposing that he had confused the elder Dauphin (who died) with the younger, the first Dauphin at that time of day would only have been seven months, when Lasne saw him *playing in the garden!*

Besides, as it happened, the royal family were not in residence at the Tuileries at any time during the year 1782.[1]

Though Gomin is described by Beauchesne as being such a faithful royalist at heart, he did not scruple to leave the supposed Louis XVII. entirely to Lasne's tender mercies, although he had no personal knowledge whatever of his new colleague, beyond the fact that he was an avowed republican.

(Of course if the prisoner on the second floor of the Tower was really only a poor little nobody, filched from some hospital for the express purpose of dying when the right moment came, Gomin naturally preferred to devote all his care and attention to Madame Royale, who as we know became much attached to him.)

[1] See M. Otto Friedrichs' *Brelan d'Adversaires*, p. 18.

Lasne is said to have grumbled at having the sole responsibility of the care of the child thrust upon him ; still the two gaolers appear to have got on very well together and to have agreed between themselves to shirk their duties as much as possible, never being on duty together at the same time, except when any special reason required it or when they had to co-operate each evening in drawing up the official bulletin to be sent in daily to the Committee of General Security.

True, according to Beauchesne, Gomin and Lasne would often meet in the prisoner's room, where Gomin would play the violin and Lasne would sing to amuse the child.

We are also given to understand that the dogged silence maintained by the prisoner on the occasion of the three "Conventionnels'" visit to the Tower, was promptly broken on Lasne's arrival.

Beauchesne gives the most touching versions of the conversations between the dying child and his keeper. The mendacity of that keeper, however, must have been truly astounding! For when he was cross-questioned in 1834 on this point, his legal deposition ran as follows, "Did you talk to the child?" "Every day."

"On what subjects?" "Only on very solemn and serious ones. Our conversations were so remarkable that I have never forgotten them. My hearers would be utterly astounded if I repeated what he said to me." Examined again in 1837, this mirror of truth made a second legal deposition, viz. :

"In the midst of the most acute suffering, the prince showed an extraordinary indifference, never breaking his silence, except on one occasion"—here Lasne quoted the anecdote about the child's medicine, which we shall refer to later, "*that was the one and only time that he ever opened his mouth.*"[1]

Meanwhile the days went by, and in spite of fiddle and song, the little victim in the Tower grew gradually worse.

[1] See *Brelan d'Adversaires*, p. 19.

For the first few months the disease had made but slow progress ; all at once, however, the symptoms grew so serious, that Gomin and Lasne decided that they must be notified to the authorities.

It appears that their first intimation of the child's condition was as follows, "Little Capet is indisposed."

Then "Little Capet is dangerously ill."

Finally, "Fears are entertained for little Capet's life."

Apparently the committees were in no hurry to call in medical aid. Evidently they wished the disease to make yet further ravages on the unfortunate child so as to disfigure him as effectually as possible. Besides, the fatal termination of this illness *must* be achieved. Did not all the negotiations with Spain and La Vendée hinge upon it? So it was not till May 6th, 1795, that the gaolers were informed of the impending visit of Dr. Désault.

The latter, who was senior physician to "L'Hospice de L'Humanité," knew Louis XVII. perfectly well, having been called in to attend him the day after Barras' visit to the Temple. Seven months had elapsed since he had last seen the prisoner—for be it noted that the deaf-mute had only been attended by the municipal doctor of the district—and in seven months a child's appearance may alter considerably under the effects of severe illness. This was probably what was hoped by those of the authorities who were in the secret of the evasion, and who had now succeeded to Barras, Harmand and the other original instigators of the plot.

The doctor made a long and careful examination of the patient, asking many questions, to which, however, he received no reply. He made no remark whatever with regard to the child's condition to any of the officials, and merely prescribed a decoction of hops which was to be administered in teaspoonfuls every half-hour from six o'clock in the morning until eight at night.

And here comes in the famous story of the medicine which furnished a series of discrepancies—not to use a

shorter but more potent word—each of which lends its weight to our side of the scale.

"Mais cette histoire de la potion est trop amusante, trop significative et trop—variée pour ne pas la raconter," says M. Otto Friedrichs.[1]

In his deposition of October 30th, 1834, Lasne declared, "that on the first day the patient refused to take his medicine on three different occasions. Whereupon *the doctor* asked, Do you think it is poison? Very well, then, I'll take some." *And so he did.*

Upon that, the child exclaimed, "Are you so bent on making me take it? All right then, I'll drink it," and he swallowed it accordingly.

In his deposition of 1840, Lasne gives another edition of this tale.

"Only on one occasion did the prince deign to speak to me. I brought him a dose of medicine, which he was ordered to take when his pains were at their worst; he refused it. I offered it to him again and again, but all in vain. At last tired of my entreaties, he snatched the glass from me and making a horrible grimace, flung the contents on the floor. Without showing the least annoyance, I replaced the glass, and in order to disarm his suspicions I drank from it myself.

"'I believe that you've made a vow that I shall drink it,' he cried, starting up in bed. 'All right then, give me the glass, I'll swallow it.' And he drank it off at one gulp.

"Those were the only words that I ever heard the prisoner speak the whole time that I was with him."

Now for Beauchesne's story. This he professes to have heard from the lips of both Gomin and Lasne, and which was certified by each of these witnesses as a true and accurate account.

"It was very difficult to persuade the child to take his medicines. During the first day he absolutely refused them. At three different times during that day Gomin drank a

[1] See *Brelan d'Adversaires*, p. 19.

whole glass of one mixture before him, by way of encouragement, but to no purpose.

"On the second day, Lasne tried his powers of persuasion and he too sipped some of the medicine from the glass. Thereupon the patient took a teaspoonful out of Lasne's hand, exclaiming, 'I believe you have made a vow to make me drink it, so I'll swallow it!'"

So we see that in 1834, Lasne swears that it was Désault who asked the child if he thought the medicine was poisoned, and it was Désault who, in order to allay the child's suspicions, drank the dose. But in 1840 the simple story is travestied again.

Désault disappears from the scene and Lasne figures in his stead. Moreover, Lasne further adorns his tale with the dramatic detail of the flinging of the glass on the ground.

Probably when he made his deposition in 1834, he knew that it would not do to pretend that the patient had gone to such lengths in the presence of the eminent Désault, whereas when he—Lasne—assumed the rôle for himself, the farce would admit of a different staging. So it is Lasne who drinks the dose, in order to inspire the child with confidence (a confidence which he certainly fails to inspire in us on behalf of his abominable lies!)—and it is to Lasne that the poor victim makes the little speech, which was at first addressed to Désault. It is Lasne also, who finally reduces him to submission.

Gomin, however, being apparently jealous of Laurent's glorious victory, was evidently not going to be left out of the story which was supplied to Beauchesne, hence the third version of the tale and the introduction of Gomin as one of the actors.

"But why!" cried Louis Blanc, "why crowd history with the grotesque and fanciful details with which Gomin and Lasne have composed the fictitious story of the death of the prisoner in the Temple?"[1]

[1] See *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, par Louis Blanc, vol. xiii. pp. 94, 95.

Of course, Beauchesne and other writers make much of the child's silence during the doctor's visit, but surely it only furnished an additional proof that he was not Louis XVII. Such behaviour on his part would have been most inconsistent with all we know of the royal child's grateful and affectionate nature, seeing that he both knew and loved Dr. Désault. For the miserable little sufferer in the Tower, however, the doctor was clearly only a stranger.

According to the regulations of the Committee of Public Safety, the doctor was obliged to pay his visit in the presence of the gaolers, a transparent device for preventing any awkward communications passing between the patient and his medical attendant.

That Désault made no remarks to the officials is very significant. Of course, he detected the trick played upon him, as any other medical man would have done! But at the same time, he must have fully realised all that was involved by taking a share in this important secret.

It is also possible, as M. Provins points out, that Désault's devotion to the royal cause being well known to Barras and Joséphine de Beauharnais, he may have been told the truth either by them or some fellow conspirator and may have sworn silence and secrecy.

Anyway, after his first visit, Désault must have known the truth, for the line of conduct which he adopted is exactly consistent with the acquisition of such knowledge. He had but one course to take, namely, to accept the conditions as he found them and to exercise his professional skill for the benefit of the patient. No one can blame him for being a silent actor in the farce, which he had neither helped to initiate nor volunteered to take part in. And no doubt the certainty of the young king's safety more than reconciled him to the existing conditions.

Neither was there any apparent reason to pity Louis' substitute. He was quite as happy in the Tower as he would have been in an hospital, and certainly far better attended than if he had been left with his poor parents, who could

not have supplied all his needs. And so for the next three weeks, Désault paid daily visits to the Tower, and did his best to prolong the poor little life which was slowly flickering to extinction. Under his orders, the child was taken daily on to the Terrace, at first supported by Lasne, but later carried in his arms, there being no fear, as his gaolers realised, of any one detecting the true state of affairs at so safe a distance.

Dr. Désault paid twenty visits in succession to the would-be Louis XVII. in the Tower.

So far, to all appearance, things had worked smoothly between the doctor and the gaolers. But at the twenty-first visit, Désault let fall a very plain hint that his mind misgave him as to whether others were as anxious as himself for his patient's welfare.

Whether suspicions of foul play had already crossed his thoughts but had been carefully concealed by him, or whether he had a sudden intuition of the dark deeds done behind his back, it is impossible to say positively, but it is more than probable that at the end of three weeks' close attendance on his patient, Désault became convinced that the child was suffering from the effects of poison.

Possibly his righteous indignation may have led him to repeat his suspicions to the authorities, or he may merely have confided them to a friend and may have declared that in the event of the child's death he should refuse to sign the certificate setting forth the demise of Louis XVII.

That he did not keep his suspicions to himself as regards the *identity* of the child in the Tower is quite clear from various proofs still extant, and that in this way he signed his own death warrant there is no doubt.

Poor Désault! meddling with State secrets is dangerous work!

Beauchesne relates that on leaving the Temple on May 20th, 1795, Breuillant, one of the municipals, asked the doctor whether the child's condition were not utterly hopeless.

"I fear it is," was the answer, "but possibly there are some people in the world who *hope* that it is so."

If this story is true, and—*mirabile dictu*—there seems no good reason for doubting its accuracy, it would in itself be quite sufficient to explain Désault's tragic end.

But it is clear from the evidence to hand, that this could not have been the only occasion on which the doctor endangered his own well-being by too plain speaking with regard to the comedy in the Temple.

Any way, one stubborn fact remains, namely that on May 31st Désault failed to make his appearance in the Tower. Neither did he come on the following day. When, however, the municipal on duty suggested that some inquiry should be made on the subject, neither Gomin nor Lasne agreed with him.

What reason, if any, they may have given for this strange indifference to their charge's welfare, is not recorded.

Consequently it was not till the third day, June 2nd, that the officials in the Temple learnt what had really happened from one of the municipals, Bridault, who arrived to take up his duties for that day.

"You can give up expecting Dr. Désault," he said, "for he died yesterday."

The unexpected death of such an eminent physician caused a tremendous sensation.[1]

The explanation which Beauchesne volunteers of this sudden death is almost too vile to quote. For he suggests that Désault, who was universally acknowledged as the soul of honour and the most kind-hearted of men, besides being the great ornament of his profession, that Désault, we say, after having poisoned the little patient under his care, by order of the Government, was in his turn poisoned by those who had used him as their tool!

Without staying to combat such a monstrous insinua-

[1] In the *Moniteur* of January 4th, 1794, the following paragraph occurs. After dilating on his European reputation and the loss that Dr. Désault's profession would sustain through his death, &c., &c., the passage continues :—

"Dr. Désault was an excellent citizen. He was persecuted by our last tyrants, their accomplices have now caused his death. The 2nd of May, the day on which he paid his first visit to the Temple, ushered in the crime which was to end his distinguished career at the age of forty-nine."

tion, we will turn to other evidence which tends to confirm much which had been conjectured as to Dr. Désault's possible share in the Temple comedy. Here is the testimony of one Madame Thouvenin, Désault's niece by marriage and who on May 5th, 1845, made the following legal deposition in Paris.

"I the under-signed Agathe Calmet, widow of P. A. Thouvenin, residing at 34 Place L'Estrapade, Paris, do hereby declare that during my husband's lifetime,[1] I constantly heard my aunt affirm that on May 2nd, 1795, Dr. Désault was summoned to the Temple to attend the 'child Capet.' (This term was used by the authorities at that time.) On the Doctor's arrival at the Tower, he was taken to a child, whom he did not recognise as the Dauphin, having often seen the latter before the arrest of the royal family. My aunt further affirmed that on the day on which the doctor made his official report to the Convention—the doctor in the meantime had tried to discover Louis XVII.'s whereabouts, being well aware that his patient was only his substitute—Désault was invited to dinner by some of the 'Conventionnels.' On returning home after this repast, the doctor was seized with most violent sickness, which only ended with his death.

"Hence the conviction shared by all his friends that Dr. Désault died from the effects of poison.

"(Signed) A. THOUVENIN."

This valuable evidence was confirmed in a letter from the sculptor Daragon written to Edmund Drumont, who inserted it in the *Libre Parole*, June 9th, 1894.

We extract the principal passages from the letter.

"My dear Master, A propos of Louis XVII., here is some well authenticated information which I place at your service. I was very intimate with Désault's niece by marriage and it is from her that I have these facts.

[1] M. Thouvenin was the nephew of Dr. Désault.

"Long before her marriage with the doctor's nephew, Madame Thouvenin had been very intimate with Madame Désault and lived a great deal with her. Consequently she had heard much talk about Louis XVII. and in the course of many interesting conversations she repeatedly assured us that though the child who died in the Temple was presented to Dr. Désault as being Louis XVII., the doctor formally refused to acknowledge him as such.

"A few days after this formal refusal, Désault was poisoned at a dinner, at which several 'Conventionnels' were present.

"I have not seen Madame Thouvenin for nearly twenty years, but I know she was a most trustworthy and reliable person, very well educated and whose veracity was impeccable. Yours &c., Laurent Daragon, 99 Quai d'Orsay."

Another confirmation of the suspicious circumstances in which Désault met his tragic end is furnished by Dr. Abeille, who was studying medicine under him at the moment of his death. Fearing for his own life, on account of his close connection with the doctor, Abeille fled then and there to the United States.

Once safely established in America, however, he seems to have published the fact far and wide that the child who perished in the Temple was not Louis XVII.

As an instance of this, we quote the following deposition made by one Mr. F. N. Estier.

"I the undersigned, F. N. Estier, hereby declare that being then resident in New York, I made the acquaintance of Dr. Abeille in 1830. He had formerly studied medicine under Dr. Désault whilst the latter was attending the Dauphin—son of Louis XVI.—in the Temple, and I hereby still further declare that the aforesaid Dr. Abeille repeatedly assured me that the Dauphin did not die in the Temple, but that in order to make people believe he was dead, a child of his age was substituted for him, and that that child having been already poisoned was put under Désault's care.

"Dr. Abeille also stated that the doctor prescribed anti-

dotes, but that being convinced in his own mind that his patient was not the Duc de Normandie—whom he knew perfectly well—he had the imprudence to confide his suspicions to one of his friends, with the result that on the very day after he had made this ill-judged communication he died from the effects of poison. This fact was made public.

"Dr. Abeille, fearing for his own safety, left France immediately for the United States, where he has lived ever since. When I knew him, he was residing at 27 Reed Street, Broadway, at the back of Washington Hotel, New York.

"I not only heard these facts from Dr. Abeille himself, but also from Madame Delisle, who was then living in Fulton Street, New York, and who like myself had been an intimate friend of Dr. Abeille. I have made this deposition, feeling that it was my duty to do so in the cause of truth.

"(Signed) F. N. Estier.

"18 High Street, Camden Town, London,
May 22nd, 1843."

Further evidence pointing to the fact that Désault had discovered the plot of the Temple Comedy is supplied by M. Lair.[1]

"My grandfather," he says,—"M. Marchand de Verrières—was always convinced that the Dauphin was alive and was constantly referring to his survival. I specially remember his doing so at the time when the Army of the Loire was disbanded—either in 1815 or 1816—when I heard him mentioning it to the wife of a military deputy, who lodged in our house at Saumar. This was the answer which I heard her make with my own ears.

"'I can well believe all you tell me, monsieur,' she said, 'for as a child I was a great friend of Dr. Désault's daughter, and I remember perfectly how one day, when we children were playing together the doctor came in, looking very pale and much agitated.

[1] He is described by M. Otto Friedrichs as "M. Lair, propriétaire et maire"—Mayor of Saumar, presumably.

"'I recollect also that when Madame Désault asked him what was the matter, the doctor answered—forgetting no doubt that we little girls were within earshot—"I have just been summoned to attend a child who was presented to me as the Dauphin, but who was most certainly not him."'"

So much for the evidence to be gleaned from the attestations of individuals, of which, if space allowed, we could quote many more ; we now come to the evidence afforded by facts. This is even stronger, and naturally more irrefutable.

To begin with, Désault's formal report to the Convention, whatever it may have contained, was never made public, and was never to be found. And this is the more remarkable, because it was stated as existing in a certain folio of the National Archives. But though that folio is forthcoming, and has been diligently searched from cover to cover, it contains no such report.

Then came the mysterious death of Dr. Choppart, the well known surgeon. He was the devoted friend of Dr. Désault, so that when he died within a few days of the latter, the strongest suspicions of foul play in the case of each victim were aroused. Both doctors were believed to have died from the effects of poison, administered in each case for the same end, namely to rid the Government of two dangerous elements.

For not only had Choppart shared Désault's attendance on the child in the Temple, but being so deeply attached to Désault, the authorities must have had good reason for believing that the two men were in each other's confidence. Moreover, it is stated—though not actually proved—that the moribund child had been taken from L'Hôtel Dieu—the hospital at which Choppart attended—in which case his possible revelations might have led to awkward developments.

In any case, the tragic circumstances of his death, its suddenness and the mystery surrounding it, leave little room for doubt that Choppart was regarded as an "undesirable" by the Convention and lost his life as a consequence.

Yet a third life was sacrificed at this stage of the Temple "Private Theatricals," also in connection with them.

For on June 5th—three days after Désault's death, and before that of Choppart had taken place—one Dr. Doublet fell a victim to the same mysterious fate. He had also been called by Désault in consultation for the dying child, and had therefore no doubt his toll to pay to the powers that were. No explanation of his sudden death was ever forthcoming, but it was unanimously attributed to the effects of poison, as in the case of his two colleagues.

And let it be noted that all these three men were cut off in the prime of life.

Small wonder that we find their contemporary Dr. Valentin writing as follows :—

"Both MM. Doublet and Choppart, who like Dr. Désault visited the young king in the Temple, having died within a few days of each other, one may be forgiven for feeling somewhat apprehensive of this novel form of arrest, which the new Committees have recently adopted."

Surely no further commentary upon the facts recorded in this chapter is needed ?

CHAPTER XIV

Dr. Pelletan appointed as medical attendant to the child in the Tower—Dr. Dumangin called in as consultant—Deposition made by Madame Jal—Beauchesne's doubtfully true anecdote concerning the prisoner—Lasne's "glorified lies"—Last hours of the prisoner in the Tower—His death—The information of his death suppressed in the Temple.

On June 5th, 1795, Dr. Pelletan was appointed to succeed Désault as medical attendant on the moribund child in the Temple. Like Choppard he was attached to the staff of L'Hôtel Dieu. Finding the patient in the most unsatisfactory condition, he immediately demanded the help of a colleague, whereupon Dr. Dumangin was appointed as such.

At that time neither Pelletan nor Dumangin had ever set eyes on Louis XVII. It is therefore possible, as some writers maintain, that they did not discover at first that a trick was being played on them. But that the truth did dawn at some time upon Pelletan is proved by the following declaration, which was found amongst Jules Favres' papers referring to the law-suit which was instituted by the heirs of Naundorf in 1874.

This declaration ought to have been produced at the trial as sworn evidence, but the Court of Appeal had neither the courage nor the justice to admit witnesses to be cross-examined, in spite of Jules Favres' eloquent pleading on the subject.[1]

The declaration to which we refer runs thus :—

"This formal deposition has just been made by Madame Elise Jal, 58 Rue de Vaugirard, widow of the doctor of that name, February 18th, 1874. At one time I had a cook in my service, who was always talking of the young Dauphin, whom she swore to having seen after he left the Temple.

[1] See M. Otto Friedrichs' *Brelan d'Adversaires*, pp. 40, 41.

She was then living in General Charette's house, where the Dauphin was in hiding.

"My husband, Dr. Jal, having often heard the girl's story, repeated it one day to Dr. Pelletan, remarking that if there were any truth in it, it flatly contradicted the statements made by him in the report of the autopsy.

"To this Dr. Pelletan replied: 'In some circumstances, silence is wisdom. I knew perfectly well that the child that was presented to me as the Dauphin was not the Dauphin, but I had no wish to be poisoned like Désault.'

"My husband repeated this story to me directly he came home, and I have never doubted the truth of it. I am therefore convinced that the Dauphin did not die in the Temple. . . . This deposition is prompted by no self-interest so far as I am concerned. I am and always have been a republican, whilst my husband was entirely absorbed in his profession and took no part or interest in politics."

In quoting this evidence in Court, Jules Favres did not enter into details, giving only the initial J. and not the name in full. He only mentioned Dr. Pelletan, as "one of the doctors" who had signed the official report of the autopsy.

All the same Jules Favres wound up his speech by saying, "Madame J. is still alive and is ready to give her evidence in person."[1]

Nevertheless, we know that on the occasion of the post-mortem, Pelletan filched the heart from the poor little corpse and piously preserved it in spirits of wine until the Restoration, a fact which suggests that whatever his suspicions may have been both before and after his little patient's death, his opinion as to his identity must have wavered now and again.

Still, whatever his ideas on the point of the child's identity may have been, it soon dawned on Pelletan that he had only been called to the Tower for the purpose of furnishing the death certificate. Meanwhile it is clear that he did his utmost to alleviate the sufferings of the dying boy.

[1] *Plaideries de M. Jules Favres devant le Cour d'Appel de Paris*, p. 336.

The last days of the latter are described so vividly by De Beauchesne that it is difficult to draw the line between what Goethe would call "Wahrheit und Dichtung," fiction being as usual so generously blended with truth.

The following extract, which we quote from *Louis XVII.* p. 317, affords a good example of what we mean.

After alluding to the little patient's touching gratitude to Pelletan for introducing more light into his room by removing the blinds from the window, Beauchesne stated that on one occasion, according to Gomin, when the doctor was talking loudly to an official, the child entreated him to speak in a lower voice, "Lest those upstairs should discover that he was ill and be made unhappy."

If it could be proved that this speech had been made, it would go far to establish the theory that the sick child *was* Louis XVII., but the foundation on which this fictitious statement is reared is too flimsy to allow the idea to be entertained. For first be it noted, that when Gomin made this statement he was in receipt of a pension from the Duchesse d'Angoulême ; secondly, that according to Lasne the child only spoke once during the last ten weeks of his life ; thirdly, that it is highly improbable that Louis XVII. would have made such a speech. He must have known too well the immense distance that separated his apartments from those of his family. Did he not climb those eighty-six steps which led from the second storey to the third, day after day during the early weeks of his imprisonment in the Tower, when the authorities allowed him to spend every afternoon with his mother and sister ? And would he not have known that it was an absolute impossibility for the doctor's voice to penetrate to the floor above him owing to the extraordinary thickness of the walls ?

It is equally unlikely that his dying substitute would have proffered such a request, even if he had been deluded into believing that his parents were lodged near him in the Tower.

The whole story therefore deserves to be ruled out of the

book as mere fiction. The same might be said of the marvellous conversation which Beauchesne rehearses for the benefit of his readers.

If the dying boy had been "Moses or one of the prophets" he could not have discoursed in more edifying language. The philosophy, the heroic resignation and the angelic patience which inform these remarkable dialogues, are truly amazing!

No wonder that those who instigated Lasne to invent these glorified lies, finally induced him to declare in his sworn evidence, that the tribunal before whom he made his deposition would be *dumbfoundered* if he were to repeat one tenth of these famous discourses.

One true item, however, may be gleaned out of all this fiction, namely, that although Gomin had left Lasne in practically sole charge of the prisoner during the two months following Laurent's departure from the Tower, he was in close attendance upon him during the last days of his life.

But to return to the early June day when Pelletan, reinforced now by his colleague Dumangin, head physician of L'Hôpital de L'Unité, reappeared in the Temple.

The doctors found their patient in very evil case, having just fainted from exhaustion occasioned by the application of some lotion, which he was now too weak to bear.

Dumangin entirely endorsed Pelletan's opinion as to the hopelessness of the child's condition, agreeing with him that they could only try to soothe his last hours. They were most anxious that a woman nurse should be called in—both Désault and Doublet had strongly urged this measure—but the authorities would not listen to them.

Did they not know that a kindly woman might easily win the boy's confidence and awkward consequences would certainly follow? In the last hours of his sad existence, the poor little creature might so easily open his heart to the only gentle and sympathising listener within reach, especially as the doctors had stipulated that she should sit up with him at night.

Under the existing regime, the gaolers were dispensed from

all attendance on him during the night, whilst their services during the day were reduced to the minimum amount, so that there was small danger that the neglected child would become confidential; but if a woman were placed about him, there was no telling what developments might arise.

Moreover, the resolution which was passed recommending the employment of a female nurse was only signed on the morning of June 8th, when the poor little sufferer was fast going down into the valley of the shadow of death.

We refrain from troubling our readers with Beauchesne's account of the child's last hours. As usual, it teems with inaccuracies and exaggerations.

Although the exact hour of his death has been matter of much dispute amongst historians, there is no doubt as to the day. For it was certainly on June 8th, 1795, that the cruelly wronged child in the Tower was relieved of the burden of life.

As to the actual moment of his release it is curious to note how no two witnesses can agree.

According to the official certificate, the death took place at three o'clock in the afternoon; Beauchesne, on Lasne's authority, fixes it at a quarter past two; Lasne, in making his deposition in 1840, affirms that the child died "one morning," whilst according to Sevestre, he must have breathed his last at one o'clock in the afternoon.

At that rate, he must have died at 1 o'clock, at 2.15, at 3 o'clock, and "one morning."

According to Lasne's evidence, the prisoner appeared so much better in the early hours of that day, that he took him out of bed, so that when Dr. Pelletan arrived at eight o'clock he found his patient up and dressed. Sharply rebuking Lasne for having allowed him to get up, the doctor promptly ordered him back to bed, so that when Dumangin came at eleven o'clock, the dying child was lying back on his pillows. It would seem that on the last day of his martyrdom, both Lasne and Gomin were in close attendance on their victim, the former, however, being the most continuously with him.

It was Lasne who was sitting by his bed when Dumont, the municipal guard, on his arrival at the Temple to take up his duties, appeared on the second floor to verify the presence of the prisoner in the Tower. Of course, like all his colleagues, Dumont had already seen the Dauphin and had therefore had no difficulty in recognising the likeness between the emaciated moribund boy of ten, and the lively healthy child of six years old, whom, he vowed, he had seen hand-in-hand with the Queen in the Tuileries gardens!

(And here we may remark that every municipal guard who claimed a former acquaintance with Louis XVII. always made exactly the same statement, in practically the same words.

The Dauphin had always been seen by them, playing in the gardens at the Tuileries accompanied by Marie Antoinette.)

Dumont, it appears, convinced both the gaolers that their patient was actually *in extremis*, pointing out to them that he was indeed at his last gasp. He further urged Gomin to go at once to the Convention in order to report the prisoner's hopeless condition. Hence Gomin's absence from the Tower at such a critical moment. For by the time he returned to the Temple the end had come. Lasne was the only one present when the spirit of the murdered child passed beyond the bounds of time.

On his return from interviewing the authorities, Gomin agreed with Lasne and Dumont to keep the household in ignorance of the child's death. They then proceeded to transfer the body from the light and airy room, into which Pelletan had ordered the patient to be moved two days before, to a small dark cupboard, where he had spent most of his prison life.

This having been accomplished, Gomin returned to the Committee of General Security, although according to the rules of the Temple regime, it was Lasne's turn to go out now. This act of Gomin's lends colour to the idea, that he was the only one in the secret, and consequently the only channel through which the Convention could transfer their orders.

Gomin found the president Gauthier in solitary possession of the board, none of the other members, *so he was told*, happening to be present at that moment.

This was a palpable lie, invented to delay the formality of making the official report to the public of the child's death. For it was most important to gain time, first that death might do its part in altering the victim's appearance, and secondly to enable the doctors to perform the autopsy which would further tend to disfigure the poor little body.

So Gomin was bidden to hold his tongue until the president had taken certain steps, and meanwhile Bourguignon, one of the secretaries of the Committee, was sent down to the Temple in order to verify the facts reported by Gomin. On his arrival at the Tower, he charged the gaolers to conceal the fact of the prisoner's death from every one in the Temple, to cause the child's meals to be cooked as usual and sent up to his apartments, and to retain the sentry on duty for that day for an additional twenty-four hours, "in order to avoid the complications which might arise if a stranger took his place."

And so from the midday of June 8th until the following morning at 11 o'clock, the household of the Temple knew nothing of the death that had occurred in their midst.

If we may trust Beauchesne, the ghastly mummery of cooking and serving the dead child's meals was duly carried out, for we hear of the faithful Caron climbing the steep stairs as usual, laden with the little Capet's supper and delivering it to Lasne, who was waiting to receive it outside the door of the apartments.

Surely it would seem high time to ring down the curtain on this grim farce ; but the hour had not come yet.

There were some acts still to be performed before the gruesome comedy of the Temple could be taken off the boards !

CHAPTER XV

Flagrant violation on the part of the Convention of all bye-laws regulating the formalities to be observed on the occasion of a death—Remy Bigot—"A friend of the deceased"—Mock identification of the body —A shameless farce—Autopsy in the Tower—Doctor's report of autopsy — Achille Severin's declaration — Deliberate double-dealing on the part of authorities—Text of the opening of document dealing with the autopsy — Pamphlet with regard to the doctor's report on post-mortem, published by a contemporary colleague.

HAVING hustled the unhappy child in the Tower out of life, the next desideratum was to dispose as quickly as possible of all the formalities connected with the certifying of the death, its official registration, and the identification of the corpse.

And if hitherto the authorities' behaviour had roused suspicions of foul play in their dealings with "little Capet," their subsequent contravention of all recognised bye-laws and regulations certainly strengthened and confirmed these suspicions.

For in their burning anxiety to avoid all risk of awkward developments they violated the statutes regulating the formalities to be observed at the occurrence of a death, in no less than three capital points.

First, they infringed the regulation which required that—

(*a*) An official notice of a death should be given in the proper quarter by the two nearest relatives of the deceased, or failing them by the two nearest neighbours. (That was not complied with.)

(*b*) That the notice should be delivered within twenty-four hours of the occurrence of the death, whereas *forty-eight* hours elapsed before the so-called "Capet's" decease was notified, and *three whole days* were allowed to pass before it was officially registered.

(*c*) That the individuals who presented themselves at the registration office should be those who were eye-witnesses of the death. (This regulation was also evaded.)

Gomin, whom his employers evidently wished to shield, disappeared at the right moment, so in his temporary absence from the Tower he was replaced by one Remy Bigot. The latter, whose name had never been heard till this juncture, was described in the registers as "a friend of the deceased."

(Was there ever a more impudent fraud?)

As to the other witnesses, namely Nicolas Laurent, Arnault, and Dominique Goddot, those before whom the declaration of death had been made and who should therefore have appeared before the registrar in compliance with the exigencies of the law, these were all conspicuous by their absence.

Thus it will be seen that the law was violated as regards the time limit for giving official notice of the death, as regards the individuals who should have given such notice, and lastly as regards the witnesses who should have presented themselves to the registrar and *who did not.*

Surely no unprejudiced person can follow the details of the further proceedings connected with (*a*) the identification of the body, (*b*) the performing of the autopsy, (*c*) the doctors' report on the said autopsy, (*d*) the arrangements for the burial, without feeling convinced that all these flagrant irregularities must have had some deep underlying cause.

Had the dead child been really and indeed Louis XVII., nothing would have been simpler or more to the advantage of all those concerned, than to have established his identity beyond all possible doubt by calling in his sister, who was actually under the same roof, to identify him as her own brother.

And if more than one witness were needed, were there not many members of the former royal household who could have been summoned to add the weight of their attestations to those of Madame Royale? And thus the

point, which was later to become a vexed question, lasting not for years, but for more than a century, would have been irrevocably settled once and for all. But the dead child in the Tower *was not Louis XVII.*, hence all these otherwise inexplicable contraventions of the law, along with all the fraudulent dealings that they necessarily entailed.

Surely it is matter for unending astonishment that any sane person can still harbour doubts with regard to the non-identity of Louis XVII. with his substitute in the Tower, after studying the devious shifts and subterfuges to which those individuals were forced to resort, who were bent on carrying through this monstrous farce.

But to return to the doings in the Temple, where the body of the poor little prisoner was still awaiting identification, *so-called.* As the officials knew well that it would be worse than useless to attempt to deceive Madame Royale as to her brother's identity, she was *not* summoned to the death-chamber, at any rate, not formally or publicly. So what really did take place?

On the following day, June 9th, four members of the Committee of General Security arrived in the Tower to verify the death of "Capet." (Some say that they came at eight o'clock in the morning, some at eleven.)

According to Lasne, Gomin, and Dumont, they treated the matter with the utmost indifference, repeating several times that, as it was an event of no political importance whatever, the head of the district section of police would come to receive the formal notification of little "Capet's" death and would then authorise the burial of the remains without any further ceremony.

Truly it was a remarkably rough and ready manner of disposing of an event, the public announcement of which would have spread dismay amongst the many faithful citizens still to be found within Paris and the thousands of brave Provincials, who were only biding their time to gather round their young king, on whose future all their thoughts and hopes were concentrated!

The next point under consideration was the identification of the body and how it could be accomplished in the most judicious and expeditious manner.

After some discussion it was settled that a certain number of the officers and sub-officers of the Temple Guard should be called upon to defile before the body, Dumont asking each in turn, "Do you recognise this child as Louis Capet?"

There were to be two relays—so the authorities decided—of these valuable witnesses. The first detachment was to be selected just before noon—twelve o'clock was the hour for changing the guard—and was to consist of the men about to be relieved, the second batch would be taken from those just coming on duty and who would present themselves in the death-chamber after noon.

Here, as everywhere else, we meet with the most conflicting and contradictory statements as to how these instructions were carried out. According to Beauchesne, the detachments followed on each others' heels, forming one continuous procession, whilst Chantelauze distinctly states that a considerable interval occurred between each "march past" of the inspectors.

"It was considered wiser," he says, "to make the going-off guard defile before twelve o'clock, but to delay their successors' admission to the death-chamber until after noon."

Beauchesne assures us that whilst the combined procession of guards was actually taking place, the surgeons who had been appointed to make the post-mortem arrived at the Temple.

Here again is an inaccuracy, for in the official report of the autopsy, which was inserted in the *Moniteur Universel*, it is especially stated that the post-mortem took place at eleven o'clock in the morning.

And though at first sight this may seem a very trifling detail, it is really a most important one.

For as there is no doubt that noon was the regular time for changing the guard, and as it is evident that the men were not to defile before the body till they were on the point

of being relieved, it is clear that they did not make their grim inspection until *after* the autopsy had enhanced the disfiguring work which disease and death had already begun on the sad little corpse.

This, no doubt, was in accordance with the authorities' orders. Be that as it may, we gather, so far as the histories of those days can be trusted, that twenty members of the guard with the addition of one Guerin (described as an official, and who vowed that he had seen the Dauphin in the Tuileries when the latter was four years old), were called upon to "view the body of the little Capet and to testify in writing as to its identity as such."

Even admitting the possibility that some of these men *had* seen Louis XVII. three years previously, it is absolutely certain that none of them could have set eyes on him during the interval since that time. Yet fifteen of their number readily made the declaration required of them as to the identity of the body.

Five men declined to make any statement, refusing to sign their names at the foot of the certificate of identification, for reasons which they carefully kept to themselves. Possibly they had no wish to be associated with such an obvious farce, or perhaps, warned by the fate of the murdered doctors, they shrank from incurring any connection with the mysterious child.

One writer, P. Veuillot, is at infinite pains to account for their conduct. But it is significant that whilst Beauchesne barely mentions this detail, Chantelauze boldly asserts that *all* the guards recognised the corpse as that of Louis XVII.

How much value the Convention attached to this act of identification may be gathered from the fact that the original document was promptly destroyed and no attempt was ever made to replace it.

And here let us emphasise the folly of supposing that if Louis XVII. had really been lying dead in the Tower, the Convention would have pursued the line of conduct which it adopted.

With half the nation and the whole of La Vendée in arms to vindicate the rights of their young king, with Spain clamouring for the possession of the royal children, what could have better served their purpose than to have invited the royalists and the King of Spain to send representatives to see Louis XVII. lying dead in the Tower? What motive could have induced the Convention to keep a whole army inactive on foreign soil, when it was dying to transfer it elsewhere, if by furnishing indisputable proofs of the young king's death the strained relations between France and Spain could have been terminated?

Does not common sense tell us that if Louis XVII. had been really dead, the Conventionnels would have taken every care to establish the fact beyond the reach of all doubt?

But Louis XVII. was alive, and though no longer in the prison, he was still in the Temple, awaiting a fair wind to waft him into safe port. And so in the meantime, those who considered the young king as a valuable pawn wherewith to play whatever game policy or expediency might dictate, were forced to initiate and enact the most shameless farce that has ever disgraced the pages of history.

We have now reached the first scene in the last act of the Temple comedy, namely the autopsy.

As regards the conditions under which it was carried out, we cannot do better than quote directly from M. Provins' work entitled *Louis XVII.*

"As to the autopsy," says that author, "we shall surely have said all that is necessary on the subject when we reproduce the sentence with which the doctor's report of the post-mortem opens.

"'We found the body of a dead child, *which the officials informed us was that of the deceased Capet.* Two of our number recognised it as that of the child whom they had attended for the last few days.'"

But what need was there for any autopsy, seeing that in the first place the child was declared to have died from

natural causes, and that in the second the Conventionnels had been careful to state that no importance of any sort was attached to the death of "little Capet"? We can only imagine that in ordering a post-mortem, the authorities must either have wished to clear themselves from all suspicion of having poisoned the child (which was possible, seeing that the mysterious deaths of the three doctors had given rise to ugly insinuations of poison), or they may have ordered the autopsy merely for the purpose of disfiguring the poor little corpse and so decreasing the risk of its identity being discovered.

Drs. Pelletan, Dumangin, Lassus, and Jeanroy were the four actors in this ghastly farce.

Out of this group, Pelletan had attended the child for three days before his death, Dumangin only during the last twenty-four hours of his existence, whilst neither Lassus nor Jeanroy had ever set eyes on him in life.

Seeing that Brunyer, the former physician of the royal children, and his assistant La Caze, were still living in Paris, as were also Naudin, Thierry, Soupé, each and all of whom had attended the Dauphin, we naturally ask why were none of these men called in to take part in the autopsy, and to lend the weight of their highly influential names to the document attesting its details. Their signatures would have been far more valuable than those of the strange practitioners which figured in the report. For whereas the latter knew nothing of sundry marks on the royal child's person, these were well known to the older physicians and would have furnished irrefutable proofs in establishing the identity of the corpse. But consistently with the rest of their conduct at this crisis, the authorities carefully excluded these eminent doctors.

Here is the text of the opening of the document, signed by the surgeons and headed "Report of the autopsy made on the body of the son of the defunct Louis Capet, performed in the Tower of the Temple at 11 o'clock on the morning of 21st Prairial 1795. (June 9th.)

"We the undersigned, J. B. E. Dumangin, chief physician in the Hôpital L'Unité, and P. J. Pelletan, chief surgeon in the Grand Hôpital de L'Humanité, accompanied by citizens Nicolas Jeanroy, Professor of medicine in Paris, and Pierre Lassus, Professor of legal medicine in the School of Health at Paris, who we have associated with ourselves under order of the Committee of Public Safety and the National Convention for the purpose of assisting us in a post-mortem examination of the body of the son of the defunct Louis Capet and in reporting on its condition, having performed the operation, do now make the following statement.

"Having all four of us arrived at 11 o'clock this morning at the outer gate of the Temple, we were received there by an official, who introduced us into the Tower. On reaching the second floor, we found the dead body of a child, apparently about ten years old, lying on a bed.

"The officials informed us that this was the corpse of the son of the defunct Louis Capet, and two of us identified it as the body of the child, whom they had attended for the last few days. These same officials informed us, that the said child had died on the previous day about three o'clock in the afternoon.

"Thereupon, we proceeded to seek for the proofs of his death, which we found fully established.[1] . . ."

Finally they close the grim report by attributing the death of the child to the ravages of *scrofulous disease of long standing*, and wind up as follows:—

"The foregoing report has been drawn up in Paris by the undersigned at the aforesaid Tower of the Temple at 4 o'clock in the day and in the year, already herein stated. Signed, J. B. E. Dumangin, P. J. Pelletan, N. Jeanroy."

And now to quote some of the valuable marginal notes made by M. Provins on this report.

First, the use of the term Capet strikes us as strange on the part of highly refined men like the doctors, especially in

[1] We take it for granted that our readers will thank us for sparing them the technical details of this gruesome performance.

the case of Pelletan and Dumangin, who were both loyal to the fallen cause. Obviously they could not invest the dead child with the rightful style and title of the young king, but in thus fraudulently labelling the little corpse, they are careful to show that they do so on the authority of the officials, not on their own initiative.

Secondly, the hour at which the autopsy was undertaken, as quoted by them, whilst contradicting the statements of both Beauchesne and Chantelauze, agrees with that which appeared in the *Moniteur*.

(The *Moniteur* of Prairial 22nd anounces little Capet's death very briefly, displaying a glorious independence of the facts stated by the doctors.

"Yesterday, at the sitting of the Committee for General Safety, it was announced that the son of Capet died the day before from the results of a tumour on his left knee and one on his *right* wrist.")

Now amongst the details of the post-mortem, mention is made of a tumour—or swelling—on the child's left wrist, whereas Harmand distinctly states that it was on the *right* wrist of the little prisoner whom *he* found in the Tower.

This discrepancy between the two accounts is quite enough to prove that the deaf-mute seen by Harmand and the scrofulous child who died in the Temple were not one and the same individual. This is valuable evidence in support of the theory of the two substitutes.

Further, it is rather surprising that, although the doctors were so careful to report the swellings found on the corpse, they make no mention of certain unusual marks which were well known by some people to exist on the Dauphin's person and which would have been most useful proofs in establishing his identity.

These marks were first, the figure of a dove with outstretched wings, which was clearly outlined on one of his thighs. The Dauphin was born with this mark.

Secondly, the traces left on his arm by vaccination. This had been performed in the shape of a triangle, accord-

ing to the Austrian practice, to please Marie Antoinette, as it had not been adopted in France at that time.

Thirdly, the white scar left on one of his lips by the bite of a rabbit.[1]

As not one of these marks was mentioned in the report, it is quite clear that they were not present on the body of the scrofulous boy, who we again repeat was not Louis XVII.

Lastly, it is difficult to reconcile the statement of the doctors, that the scrofulous condition of the deceased was of "long standing," with the fully attested official report that the prisoner in the Tower was in "perfect health" when Simon left the Temple.

The finishing touch to this patchwork of bungles and irregularities which marked the so-called legal formalities observed on this occasion was given by Achille Severin, deputy for L'Ille and Vilaine. For, ascending the tribunal of the Convention at the precise moment when the doctors were actually engaged on their gruesome task of dissection, this patriot boldly announced not only that little Capet was dead, but that all the legalities arising out of the situation had been conformed with and that all documents relating thereto—the doctors' report of the autopsy included—had been delivered to the authorities and were already safely lodged in the National Archives.

At that moment the post-mortem had not been completed, whilst the doctors' report had not even been begun!

As a matter of history, no such document was ever to be found in the aforesaid archives.

Those who are interested in examining still further into the irregularities committed by those immediately concerned in the plot of the Temple, will do well to study the chapter entitled "Formalités après décès" in M. Provins' *Dernier Roi Légitime de France.*

Here we will only extract the following passage from the same work, which appears to suggest the most logical

[1] Later on we shall see that all these marks were found on the body of Naundorf, and were duly notified in a well authenticated certificate.

explanation of all the tricks and subterfuges we have just enumerated.

"The delays which occurred after the death of the child, in complying with the exigencies of the law, were not due either to want of decision or to any lack of preparation. The situation had been anticipated and well provided for.

"Neither did they arise from any desire on the part of the conspirators to gain time for consultation with each other. All their calculations had been made too carefully for that to be necessary. No, the *apparent* omissions and malpractices which marked all their proceedings and appear in all the documents connected with the death—its registration, the post-mortem, and the subsequent burial—were deliberately planned and carried out, being the outcome of much foresight."

The individuals who were "running the plot" were determined, in homely parlance, to have two strings to their bow, so that no matter how the wind might shift, they might trim their sails accordingly. Hence, though it was well to have an official certificate of the demise of Louis XVII., it was still better to hamper that certificate with a legal flaw, which might easily be exposed and turned to account, if it should be necessary to dispute the validity of that certificate. This was evidently the ulterior motive which prompted all the double-dealing on the part of the authorities at this juncture and instigated all their illegal transactions.

For throughout the whole affair they must have always kept the achievement of a double object in view, namely, to establish the fact of Louis XVII.'s death in the Temple and at the same time to leave a sufficiently large loophole in the legal evidence to hand to enable them to disprove that death should future circumstances demand it.

The action adopted by the authorities in dealing with the formal declaration and registration of the child's death affords a palpable example of their pre-determined double-dealing.

The declaration and registration are *each entered on different forms* and in such a manner as to serve two ends.

On one hand, they establish the occurrence of the death, and on the other they leave an open door for dispute as to the legality of these certificates.

For under a statute dated September 20th, 1792, the use of loose sheets for purposes of legal registration was prohibited in these terms:

"It is strictly forbidden to write or sign any certificate of birth, marriage or death on a loose sheet,—"sur feuille volante"—under penalty of 100 francs fine and the suspension during ten years of all municipal rights and privileges."

Consequently the authorities, by placing the certificates under our consideration on loose sheets, practically destroyed their legal value, *and knew that they were doing so.*

It is very interesting to come across a statement made by a contemporary doctor disputing the facts deposed in the medical report of the autopsy, because this statement introduces a new element into the affair. There is good reason for accepting the document as genuine, seeing that it was printed in Paris in 1795, and, though it may not have been widely read, that fact is easily explained. For no doubt during both the Revolution and Restoration the authorities took every means to suppress its circulation.

All the same a copy exists amongst Eckard's papers, it having been given to him by one Dr. Valentin, Knight of the Order of St. Michael and residing at the Boulevard of the Madeleine, Porte St. Honoré No. 7.

(It is significant that the loyal Eckard, the historian *en titre* to Louis XVIII. and his ardent collaborator, should have entirely overlooked this interesting document in compiling the history of those times. But it was indispensable to his purpose to maintain that Louis XVII. died of a scrofulous disease.)

The aforesaid document, which takes the form of a letter, runs—

"You are anxious, Monsieur, to learn my opinion as to

the causes of the death of Louis XVII., King of France and Navarre. It is impossible to regard this death as a mere ordinary event, when we recall first, the fate which overtook Louis XVI. (that best and most virtuous of kings), and secondly, the openly avowed desire on the part of the 'Conventionnels' to steep themselves in the blood of sovereigns.

"This desire was expressed by one of the members of the Convention in the atrocious admission which he made before the Tribunal and which was allowed to pass unrebuked. 'I tremble,' said the reprobate, 'to think of the millions of money which have been voted to secure the poisoning of various royalties and which have been absolutely wasted, seeing that they did not succeed in producing even a colic!'

"Thirdly, the silence which the authorities preserved as to the illness of the child in the Temple, which needs explanation.

"But as you demand my opinion[1] in my professional capacity as a medical man, the above-mentioned facts must not influence me in forming that opinion. I must dismiss all suspicions from my mind and take no account of public rumours or mere probabilities. This I shall do with the strict impartiality that has always characterised the opinions which I have submitted from time to time to various judges to assist them in difficult cases, and in which any error on my part might serve either to exculpate the guilty or convict the innocent. I am bound to assume that Dumangin, Pelletan, Lassus, and Jeanroy were all members of the Faculty and of the Royal College of Surgeons in Paris, to which a love of religion, honour, justice and truth, along with loyalty to the King, constitute the only title to admission. I am also bound to presume that in spite of the anxiety felt by the 'Conventionnels' to clear themselves from all suspicion of having poisoned the scion of a royal house, this consideration would not have been allowed to

[1] This word "demand" suggests that the opinion had been asked for by some one in authority, possibly by one of the Vendéen leaders.

influence the doctors in making their report, any more than I can suppose that the doctors on their side—having regard to the extraordinarily sudden death of the eminent Dr. Désault—were prompted to sacrifice their principles to a sense of their own self-preservation.

"Now there are two equally just methods of attacking an official report.[1]

"One may either dispute it directly on the ground of its being untruthful, or one may prove that the deductions which are made from the facts it represents are not justifiable.

"To be able to dispute the truth of the doctors' report, one should have made the dissection oneself, for obviously the entire control of the affair being in the hands of those to whom suspicion pointed, they were able to shield themselves by drawing up the report of the post-mortem in whatever terms they judged best for their safety.

"Nevertheless, be the Convention ever so powerful, it cannot override the gross inconsistencies which occur in this report, nor can it justify the deductions which experts have made from the facts therein stated. And why?

"Because those facts afford no real proof that Louis XVII. died, as they assert, of a scrofulous disease.

"On the contrary, certain details furnished by the doctors afford distinct evidence that the child's death was due to another cause."

The writer then proceeds to analyse the minutest medical details of the report, his object being to prove that, more or less, every trace of disease discovered in the course of the autopsy and referred by the doctors to scrofula, was distinctly attributable to the action of slow poison.

Thus he draws special attention to the reported adhesion of the lungs to the pleura and diaphragm and pericardium, because he maintains that these adhesions were the result *not* of scrofula, but of inflammation, which was set up by the gradual administration of poison.

[1] Here the writer betrays his qualifications as a forensic medical man.

"Experts," continues the writer, "had diagnosed Louis XVII.'s complaint as being consumption. Very good! but Sauvage"—an apparently recognised authority on the complaint—"affirms that a slight decoction of corrosive acid acts as a slow poison, which kills the patient by inducing consumption, because the inflammation which is produced by this corrosive acid results in creating cohesions both in the lungs and bowels."

In confirmation of this statement, the writer quotes the case of a young man, who died from the effects of taking corrosive sublimate during five consecutive months, and whose post-mortem he performed.

He next adduces the case of a woman, who also died a victim to the same poison, and whose autopsy he had also conducted. In each of these instances he had discovered precisely the same results as those reported by Dumangin and his colleagues.

"The adhesions, therefore, which they describe in their official report and which caused the illness and death of Louis XVII., were the result of inflammation, which inflammation, according to the highest medical authorities, was attributable solely to the effects of a corrosive poison.

"The two cases which I have quoted above, in each of which the traces found in the bodies were entirely identical with those reported in the autopsy of Louis XVII., prove beyond all reasonable doubt that it was the administration of slow poison which caused the death of the child in the Temple.

"A perfectly well demonstrated truth needs no signature to reinforce it; moreover, considering that both Doublet a physician and Choppart a surgeon attended the young king like Désault, and like Désault died a few days afterwards, it is surely pardonable to feel somewhat apprehensive of this novel form of arrest which seems to find favour of late with most of our new Committees."

Without attempting to criticise the strict and careful analysis to which the report of the autopsy is subjected in

this document, we must draw attention to the evident conviction felt by a contemporary of Pelletan and his colleagues that Désault, Choppard, and Doublet did succumb to violent deaths.

This is noteworthy, because it proves that the belief that their tragic ends *were* brought about by foul means, was not a suggestion of later date, but was entertained already at that time of day.

CHAPTER XVI

Arrangements for burial of prisoner in the Temple—Dusser's report of burial—Beauchesne's account of funeral—Common people declare the burial a make-believe—Peuchet's report of the funeral—"Jugglery with the living and the dead"—Mystery as to the locality of the grave—Charpentier's curious evidence—Supposed coffin of Louis XVII. exhumed by Napoleon's orders—Results of examination of coffin—Establishment of certain facts connected with the Temple tragi-comedy—Eight lives sacrificed—Mysterious fate of Caron, the "faithful kitchen knave"—Louis XVIII. strongly suspected of having had a share in it.

FROM this moment, so far as the hapless child in the Temple is concerned, "our story darkens down to its sorrowful conclusion."

It darkens down indeed, for the twilight of mystery which has hitherto enshrouded so many of our facts, deepens in this closing scene of the tragi-comedy to the blackness of night, so that it is impossible to penetrate the dense shadows, in which all that is connected with the burial of "little Capet" is enveloped.

No two witnesses agree as to when or where the burial took place or as to the manner in which it was conducted.

Dusser, the head of the police force of the Temple district, was nominally responsible for all the arrangements, and according to the account which he gave in his own journal, he played a very important part on the occasion. We extract the following entry from his journal.[1]

"On the twenty-fourth Prairial, I was directed by the Committee of Public Safety to go to the Temple, in order to verify the death of the young and innocent victim who had just expired there. I was further commanded to

[1] We quote this evidence for what it is worth, seeing that in November 1814 Dusser applied to Louis XVIII. for a post as Police Commissioner in Paris, and it was therefore to his interest to represent his past behaviour in the most favourable light.

superintend his burial in the cemetery of Ste. Marguerite, Faubourg St. Antoine.

"The anticipation of this ceremony attracted a large crowd to the neighbourhood of the Temple and a great number of people gathered round the entrance of the Palace.

"The authorities, being most anxious to avoid all publicity, suggested that the little corpse should be carried out from the Temple through the small gate, which opened on the enclosure. The proceeding struck me, however, as so indecent that I protested against it, and though I was the only one who did so, I gained my point and the cortège started from the great gate.

"The public sorrow and sympathy, all expression of which the authorities had wished to suppress, were visible on every face, but as I had foreseen, there was no kind of demonstration.

"On reaching the cemetery, I took upon myself to have the child's body buried in a separate grave, instead of allowing it to be thrown into the large common burying vault. This was accordingly done in the presence of M. Briard and M. Goddet, both of whom were members of the Section of the Temple, and who cordially endorsed my opinion on this point.

"That very evening, however, I was summoned before the Committee of Public Safety to give an account of my conduct. Most of the members were furious with me, and demanded that I should be forthwith arrested and taken before the Tribunal of the Revolution."

(This is a glaring misstatement on Dusser's part, seeing that at that time of day the "Tribunal de la Révolution" had already been abolished.) "Happily for me," continues the writer, "I had a good friend in one of the influential members, Louis du Bas Rhin, who managed to calm his colleagues down, so that I was at length dismissed to my duties with a severe caution to behave differently for the future under pain of the direst penalties."

But though Dusser, as already stated, was nominally responsible for the arrangements connected with this mock funeral, Voisin, the Master-undertaker, was the person who actually carried them out.

"The dead child," states the latter, "was put into a deal coffin, which was not nailed down in order not to distress the august princess his sister." He further states that this occurred at 6 o'clock in the evening.

Dusser, in his official record, fixes it at 8.30 *on June 12th*, whilst another document, also official, gives the hour as 7 o'clock and the day as June 10th.

Beauchesne, entering into fuller details, says, "The undertaker came into the room with the coffin under his arm ; he set it down on the floor, and lifting the little corpse from the bed placed it, in an absolutely nude condition, inside the coffin. Born in the purple, he was not allowed a shroud for his burial !

"The youngest official, [1] moved with compassion, put his handkerchief under the little head, whereat all his colleagues looked askance at him. Encouraged, however, by his example, Lasne fetched a sheet, which did duty for the missing shroud. The deal planks were then fastened down with four nails, the loud strokes of the hammer reverberating through the ancient Tower and awakening many an echo !

"The coffin was then carried down into the yard. Seven o'clock was the hour appointed for the removal of the body and the departure for the cemetery."

In his anxiety to shorten the interval during which the coffin was left unwatched, Beauchesne fixes the start to the cemetery certainly one if not two hours earlier than it actually took place.

"The cortège," continues Beauchesne, "left the Temple enclosure by the great gate, where a large crowd was assembled, every face expressing sorrowful sympathy, whilst a small detachment of guards served as an escort."

[1] With his usual dry humour, M. Provins asks if each of the municipals had been careful to furnish his exact age upon that occasion !

(Chantelauze affirms that there were two detachments, whilst, as regards the sympathising crowd, Paul Gaulot,[1] gives the direct lie to this statement. "Throughout the immediate neighbourhood of the city," he says, "everyone boldly asserted that the preparations made for the little Capet's funeral were all sham, that he was *not* dead, but that he had been taken out of the Temple and conveyed to a safe distance. From the first, the common people believed in the evasion, their plain sense leading them to declare that the burial was only a make-believe.")

"The coffin, covered with a pall," goes on Beauchesne, "was borne on a shutter by four men, who relieved each other in pairs at intervals. It was preceded by six soldiers under a sergeant's command. The gaoler Lasne, Garnier and Vallon, officers of the brigade, the municipals Arnoult and Goddet, who were on duty that day, Dumont, Darlot, Guerin and Bigot followed with several members of the Temple staff. Another half-dozen soldiers closed the procession. The crowd also followed in the rear, the names of 'little Capet' and the 'Dauphin' being freely circulated from mouth to mouth accompanied with many compassionate sighs. In the Rue Epincourt, several children stood bare-headed out of respectful sympathy for the child, who had been far poorer in his death than they were ever likely to be in their life!"

This harrowing passage is entirely consistent with M. Beauchesne's method of writing history. He was bound "to pile up the agony" to the last line of his valuable work! thereby sustaining his usual independence of facts which characterises most of his book.

But the most impartial critic cannot reconcile this account with the orders issued by the Convention, that the burial was to take place *without any ceremony whatever.*

At any rate, a flat contradiction to Beauchesne's statements is furnished by Peuchet, who for more than thirty

[1] See his *Tableaux de la Révolution Française.*

years was keeper of the police archives, and whose evidence consequently commands attention.

This is how Peuchet writes on the subject:

"How ought the Government to have acted on the occasion of the young king's death? Common sense dictates the answer. Fighting was still going on in La Vendée and causing grave anxiety to the Convention. It was therefore most important to convince the Vendéens of the death of Louis XVII. and thus quench their last ray of hope. Nay, it was absolutely imperative to prevent once and for ever, all possible rekindling of enthusiasm amongst the loyalists by a reported resuscitation of the dauphin at some future date.

"This being so, in order to baffle his supporters and by way of anticipating any potential resurrection, there ought to have been a public lying-in-state of the king, followed by a public funeral in broad daylight with a general invitation to every kind of spectator to come both to the Temple and the cemetery. And what *was* done?

"Those in charge of the arrangements hid themselves behind the thick walls of the Tower and waited till nightfall! In short, the burial took place not only without any ceremony, but clandestinely!"[1]

And from other evidence extant, we gather that there were no guards and no pall-covered coffin borne on men's shoulders, only a simple closed-carriage, into which a coffin was packed and driven away from the Temple gates in the direction of the cemetery at nightfall!

Chantelauze comes nearer to the truth than Beauchesne. He states that two municipals arrived at the Temple at half-past eight in the evening, under orders from the Committee of General Security to remove "the body of the son of Capet."[2]

[1] See Peuchet's *Collection de Souvenirs Contemporains, tendant à établir la vérité dans l'Histoire*, vol. i. pp. 395 and *suivantes*.

[2] It is very significant that none of the contemporary papers make any reference to the burial of the little prisoner in the Temple, which argues that it certainly failed to achieve any notoriety and confirms Peuchet's statement on that point.

Voisin names *half-past nine* as the hour when that stealthy little procession set forth from behind "the thick walls of the Tower," and on learning this, we naturally ask, what went on during the long interval which elapsed between the arrival of the coffin at six o'clock and its removal from the Temple, three and a half hours later?

In that space of time much may have happened, and undoubtedly much did.

But in the absence of absolutely reliable evidence on this crucial point, we cannot speak positively. There is, however, good reason to believe that the unfastened coffin was carried from the Tower into the palace of the Temple,[1] and possibly as Voisin declares it was screwed down there out of earshot of Madame Royale.

At any rate, it is perfectly certain that the coffin must have been deposited *somewhere* during that long interval, and therefore all the advantages that time, darkness, and privacy could afford were at the service of the conspirators. And that they made good use of them to effect a change in the contents of the coffin, there are the strongest grounds for believing.

(We shall adduce striking proofs of that later on.)

Either the corpse was removed—this is the most likely alternative—and Louis XVII. heavily drugged was substituted in its place, or the coffin may possibly have had a false bottom, so that on leaving the Temple it contained both the living child and the dead one.

One shudders at such a gruesome possibility!

It is, however, probable that this jugglery with the living and the dead did not end with the removal of the coffin from the Temple, for no doubt there were still tricks to be played on the way to the cemetery. There is ample scope for every kind of speculation!

[1] In order to isolate the tower from the adjacent buildings, the Commune employed an architect, Paley by name, in 1792 to enclose it with a walled precinct. To reach the open street from this enclosure, it was necessary to go across part of the Temple garden and then traverse the whole length of the Palace, which opened on to the yard in the shape of a horse-shoe.

If Louis XVII. were really drugged to prevent all danger of his making a false movement, it would be easy enough for his deliverers to give him any explanation they liked as to the method of his removal, but, later on, it will be interesting to hear Naundorf's own account.

That the body of the dead child did not travel inside that coffin to the cemetery may be taken for granted. Some years later, General d'Andigné discovered the body of a child in a bed of lime at the foot of the Tower, and besides this, other facts which have come to our knowledge convince us that Louis XVII.'s substitute was no more buried at St. Marguerite's cemetery than was Louis XVII. himself.

There is no doubt that *no human remains* were conveyed thither on that far-away June night.

The extraordinary precautions which were adopted by the Committee of General Security with regard to the grave are sufficient to justify our opinion on that point.

Neither the caretaker of the cemetery, nor the gravedigger nor his assistants could ever agree as to the exact position of the grave. In obedience to the orders of the Convention, the coffin was thrust away in a corner of the graveyard, with no kind of rite and no outward sign to mark the spot. For three days and nights a guard was posted in the cemetery, for fear, so it was said, that the royalists might try to remove the body of their young king.

What happened at the expiration of that time we shall presently learn from a deposition made twenty years later by one Charpentier.

In the meanwhile, however, the coffin having been happily disposed of, the officials who had assisted at the so-called burial, proceeded to draw up the following report.

"In compliance with the Act dated September 1792, we instructed Pierre Dusser, head of the District Police, to accompany us to the Temple in order to certify the decease of the son of Capet, there being present at the time in the Temple, citizens Lasne and Gomin, commissionaries of the Guard of the Temple, and citizen Joseph Guerin, civil

official of the Section 'L'homme-armé,' on duty at the Tower that day. These aforesaid exposed to our view the corpse of a male child of ten years old laid on a bed, which had been identified as the body of Louis Charles Capet.[1]

"Having received a declaration to that effect from the aforesaid citizens, Lasne and Gomin, they (being otherwise qualified to do so) delivered the said declaration to the said deputy Dusser for the purpose of registration. We then caused the body of the aforesaid son of Capet to be placed in a coffin and, accompanied by Jacques Guérin, head of the Brigade of the quarter of Montreuil, residing at the Grande Rue Faubourg St. Antoine No. 109, Pierre Vallon, captain of the same force, residing at Porte St. Antoine No. 4, and Lasne, commissary of the Temple guard, we conducted the body to the cemetery of St. Marguerite, rue Bernard, Faubourg St. Antoine, that being the burying-ground assigned to the inhabitants of our locality.

"Here the coffin was deposited in a grave which was filled in, in our presence. The transport was effected with complete calm and tranquillity. All these facts which we here place on record at ten o'clock on the above-mentioned day, month and year are duly attested by us, the undersigned."

Here follow the names of the above-mentioned individuals.

With this most mendacious document the curtain may fall at last upon the gruesome comedy of the Tower of the Temple.

And now for Charpentier's deposition, made in 1816.

During the night which followed the burial of Louis XVII., he declared that he and two of his assistants were requisitioned by the Committee of the Luxembourg Section to discharge a queer task in the cemetery of Clamart. This was to dig a grave three feet wide and six feet long in the

[1] "Identified by whom?" asks M. Provins. "If by themselves, they are careful not to say so."

cemetery, under the surveillance of a member of the committee.

Before the task was actually finished, three more members of the same committee, wearing their scarves of office, drove up in a close carriage. From this, with the driver's help, they lifted out a coffin, about four feet long and ten inches wide, which they promptly lowered into the new grave, calling upon Charpentier and his men to tread in the earth so thoroughly that scarcely any trace was left on the surface of the ground having been disturbed. They then made each of the workmen swear the strictest secrecy, threatening them with the severest pains and penalties if they ever breathed a word of the work on which they had been engaged.

"Finally," says Charpentier, "they gave ten francs to each of my assistants and invited me to come and claim my remuneration at their committee room. This I took very good care not to do for various reasons; but chiefly because I heard one of the members say with a laugh, 'Hm! the little Capet will have some way to go now if he means to join his family.' These words were spoken in a low voice; but probably they were meant to be overheard."

The coincidence of the dates makes it quite possible to believe that the coffin buried in the Clamart cemetery was the one which left the Temple and whose contents had been changed either in the Palace or on the road leading to St. Marguerite's cemetery. On the other hand, it is also possible that the same sort of trick had been played in the latter cemetery.

The coffin which was exhumed under Napoleon's orders as well as that which M. Haumet, curé of the parish, had opened in 1846, were evidently associated in some way with the jugglery of 1795.

For when M. Laguerre caused the contents of the coffin discovered by the curé to be examined by five surgical experts—all the most eminent men in Paris—they declared unanimously that not one of the bones submitted to their

examination could have belonged to a boy of ten, being undoubtedly parts of a skeleton of a youth aged from fifteen to nineteen.

According to M. Otto Friedrichs, who actually handled the skull in 1835, it showed a wisdom tooth already cut.[1]

A sequel was of course needed to the comedy. For as soon as the republicans realised how their own ends might be served by "running," so to speak, Louis XVII. against Louis XVIII., by putting down one and setting up the other, as circumstances might require, they insidiously encouraged the idea of the young king's escape from the Temple. They even went so far as to promulgate an order for the arrest of any child found travelling towards the frontier, whose appearance resembled that of the late child in the Tower.

Louis XVII. being, to their certain knowledge, safely bestowed in secure hands, he ran no risk of arrest.

Probably the promulgation of that order was mainly responsible for the widespread belief in the survival of the young king, and more than that, no doubt it initiated the subsequent appearance of many false dauphins, whose existence the usurper was diplomatic enough to encourage, it being a case of "safety in a multitude," so far as Louis XVIII. was concerned.

Meanwhile, by way of conclusion, let us sum up in rough outline those facts connected with the Temple tragi-comedy which up to this point we have sought to establish, namely:

That Louis XVII. was removed from the Tower at some time between the middle of October and the beginning of November 1794, and that he left the Temple early in June 1795.

That his place was supplied in the Tower by the deaf and dumb child, who served as his substitute until probably the end of March 1795; that the deaf-mute was in his turn exchanged for the second substitute, who was none other than the moribund child whose death in the Tower and subsequent autopsy did really and truly take place.

[1] See *Brelan d'Adversaires*, p. 5.

As regards the burial of that child, we lean to the theory that the body was buried at the foot of the Tower and never left the Temple precincts at all.

As to the overwhelming mass of misstatements, contradictions, and "round unvarnished *lies*" which characterise the evidence given on different occasions by Gomin and Lasne, the two gaolers who were on duty in the Tower when the prisoner's death occurred, so far from enhancing the doubtfulness of Louis XVII.'s evasion, they not only throw valuable sidelights on the subject, but emphasise the duplicity and fraud which the transactions in the Temple demanded. It is easy to understand the delicate manœuvring which both Gomin and Lasne must have needed to steer their course between all the shoals which beset those, who for any reason were associated with the Temple mystery. And when, later on, they were called upon for their evidence, it must have required extraordinary skill to avoid being snared themselves in the tangled web which had been gradually spun round all the facts of Louis XVII.'s evasion, his civil death and mock burial, and the real decease and autopsy of his unhappy little substitute.

And once more, we ask, why should there have been any need of all the false witnesses, all the chicanery, all the fraud, which marked every proceeding connected with the death and burial of the fictitious little Capet?

For, as Jules Favres maintained in his able speech of 1874, "Had an event of such importance as the death of Louis XVII. really occurred, no one would have contested the right of the general public to be put in possession of the fact with all its details. Moreover, it would have been to the advantage of the Convention, as we have already pointed out, to publish it far and wide and thus authentically and formally establish the fact of the young king's death."

All their proceedings, on the contrary, were so out of order, all their transactions were so suspicious, that to the onlooker it would almost seem as if they had made a science

of multiplying the grounds which later on might serve as good reasons for contesting the death of Louis XVII.

By way of setting a hideous seal on all the horrors which darken the story of the "child in the Temple," let us add that in the first half of June 1795, no less than eight lives were sacrificed to achieve the consummation of the dismal farce enacted within the Tower. The three doctors were the first victims to go down into the dark valley, then followed their little patient, whilst the doomed procession ended with Voisin's four assistants, who took part in the mock burial.

"All my assistants," said Voisin, "were promptly overtaken by the same terrible fate which befell the three eminent doctors."

To this octave of murders, the story of poor Caron's sudden disappearance in later years makes a fitting appendix. There is good reason for believing that Laurent, having carefully tested his trustworthiness, admitted Caron to the secret of Louis XVII.'s evasion and subsequent concealment in the Tower loft. And that when Laurent left the Temple, it became Caron's duty to supply the wants of the royal stowaway.

The mysterious fate which overtook him during the reign of Louis XVIII. confirms this theory, because it so clearly suggests that he was a marked man and evidently one to be silenced.

This is the story which was told by Caron's son and which has never been contradicted.

"Immediately after the Restoration, my father was sent for by the King, who questioned him very closely as to what he knew about the supposed evasion of the Dauphin. My father, believing that his information would be welcome to the King, frankly told him all that he knew of the transactions in the Tower, whereupon Louis XVIII., after thanking him warmly for the zeal he had displayed, dismissed him, apparently very well pleased with him. My father, however, was very grave and pre-occupied after that

interview, though when we asked him the reason, he would not tell us.

"From that time Prince Jules de Polignac paid frequent visits to my father and had many private talks with him, the prince always writing down notes of all he said. From time to time, father would drive away with the prince in his carriage, but we never knew where they went together. We only noticed that my father always seemed worried when he returned and did not like to be asked any questions.

"The last visit paid by the prince was exactly a fortnight after the assassination of the Duc de Berri, which occurred February 13th, 1820. The next day my father left the house and was never seen or heard of again, and though we left no stone unturned, we never found any trace of him. One day!" adds Caron, "I was advised by a stranger to relinquish the search, if I did not wish to come to a bad end myself!"

And so the poor faithful "kitchen knave" passed out of his home and out of history after that fatal March the 1st.

What need have we of further witness as to the sinister share which Louis XVIII. undoubtedly took in the mysterious disappearance of one who knew all the secrets of the Temple transactions?

BOOK II

THE TRAGI-COMEDIANS OF THE TEMPLE

"Celui-là fait le crime à qui le crime sert."—CORNEILLE

CHAPTER I

Louis XVIII. in his character of brother and uncle—"Faux comme Monsieur"—Marie Antoinette's letter dealing with Monsieur—Monsieur's letter to the Duc de Fitzjames—Signing of Calonne's Manifesto—Louis XVI.'s beseeching letters to the European Courts—The tide of Revolution rises—"Cain!"—"Le coup est porté"—"What is not useful is harmful"—Extract from the letter of the Duc de Champagnac—Courtois' statements as to Robespierre's papers—Thomas Martin, the peasant seer—Striking proofs of Monsieur's treachery—Louis XVIII.'s suspected complicity in the assassination of the Duc de Berri.

"He who profits by the crime, commits the crime," writes Corneille.

We borrow the quotation from M. Provins' title-page as the most suitable opening to the subject with which this chapter deals, namely the part played by Louis XVIII. in his character as brother and uncle. Even before the occasion of Madame Royale's baptism—when he tried to "sow a slander in the common ear" by making the vilest insinuations as to the child's legitimacy—"faux comme Monsieur" had become a catchword throughout Paris.

His behaviour at the very dawn of the Revolution reveals him in his true light. For all through those threatening days of oncoming trouble, so far from lifting a finger to aid the king, Monsieur put forth *both his hands* to work his undoing.

A modern Sir Modred, he truly was, who

> "Like a subtle beast
> Lay couchant, with eyes upon the throne,
> Ready to spring, waiting a chance."

Very early in the day, Marie Antoinette took the right measure of her brother-in-law and realised that he was not to be trusted.

On November 12th, 1775, she writes to her mother:

"Having unluckily a very weak character, Monsieur behaves in a very underhand way and sometimes most meanly, resorting to methods for raising money or promoting his own interests which an honest commoner would scorn to employ."

In the following December, the Queen again refers to his duplicity. "He has been trying to get intimate with me by writing a letter addressed to one of his creatures, but which he nevertheless instigated a member of my household—who I can trust—to bring under my notice. It contains very high-sounding phrases and a deal of meanness and hypocrisy."

Three months earlier, the Comte de Mercy Argenteau, writing to his sovereign Marie Thérèse, says, "It is quite evident that Monsieur is very ambitious, and his naturally deceitful character makes it most important to be on the alert as to the means he may adopt to gain his ends."

Amongst the "Documents and Réflexions" which form an appendix to *L'Abrégé de l'Histoire des Infortunes du Dauphin*, there is a letter written by Monsieur to the Duc de Fitzjames—Versailles, May 13th, 1787—which throws a valuable but equally ugly sidelight upon the character of Louis XVIII. It runs—

"My dear Duke—The 'Assemblée des Notables' is drawing near the end of its session and so far the great question is still unbroached.

"You may be sure that the 'Notables' will have no hesitation—after the papers which you placed in their hands more than six weeks ago—in accepting the fact that the King's children are not his legitimate offspring. The Queen's guilt in this matter is fully established in these documents, and I feel sure that you personally are too loyally attached to the Blood Royal not to shrink from acknowledging these bastards as the King's lawfully begotten children. . . .

"I shall be away at the next meeting, but my brother D'Artois will take my place. When the truth with regard to

these children has once been declared, it will be easy work to turn the results to good advantage. Parliament does not love the Queen, and it is not therefore likely to raise any difficulties, but if it should be pleased to do so, we *have the means for reducing it to reason. . . . At any rate we must make the venture.*

"(Signed) LOUIS-STANILAUS-XAVIER."

On December 28th, 1792, this "man of plots and craft and poisonous counsels" writes as follows to his brother D'Artois.

"Everything that fate could devise to injure our interests seems to have combined against us during the last eighteen months, but now Fortune seems inclined to smile upon us.

"Though Condé has managed to secure the command of the army furnished by the King of Prussia and the Emperor, it doesn't matter. *If only the impending blow can be successfully struck* it will be worth a whole army in itself.

"We shall still have sixty 'Montagnards' on our side as well as the English Government, and with such support we can hope for anything. Remember that the reed which bends lives longer than the oak which breaks. In time, my brother, you will be an oak yourself, and then God only knows what may happen!" [1]

Contemporary historians are not sparing of their criticisms of Monsieur.

M. Maxime de la Rocheterre and the Marquis de Beaucourt write: [2]—

"Neither the King's brothers nor the Duc d'Orléans were fond of the King, still less of the Queen, nor did they love their children who stood between them and the Throne."

[1] These letters were first published in *Les Secrets de la Cour de Louis XVIII., Recueil de Pièces Authentiques, Lettres Confidentielles au Général Pichegru, au Comte d'Artois, au Duc de Fitzjames, aux Généraux Vendéens, &c., &c.*, by M... R... Paris Eymery, de Launay, Plancher, April 1815. The second letter to the Duc d'Artois, which we quote further on, and where Louis XVIII. announces that *the blow has fallen*, is also taken from the same source.

[2] The joint editors of *Lettres de Marie-Antoinette*, published in Paris, 1895–96.

The Queen was well aware of this and often said so in her letters.

Further on, the same authors affirm that Monsieur never forgave the Queen for at length becoming a mother, thus disappointing all the ambitious hopes which he had cherished of his future aggrandisement. Such was the future Louis XVIII. at his debut into public life, and as time went on and conditions gradually ripened for the development of the Revolution, we have ample evidence that more than ever did he "fix his eyes upon the throne, ready to spring, waiting a chance!" If this were not so, why did he, on the very morning after the Convocation of the National Assembly, incite his equerry, De Montesquieu Ferenzac, to join the Tiers-État? Why did he adopt such a friendly attitude towards the opposition as to lead Soutaire to declare—

"Monsieur loves no one but himself, he only simulates friendship. He wants the throne for himself, his family is a secondary consideration. He regards his brother as an obstacle in his path and it is quite possible that he may yet get rid of him."

"Son frère lui fait obstacle, il est possible qu'il s'en débarrasse."[1]

The Queen, writing to Fersen, Oct. 31st, 1791, says: "Monsieur's letter to the Baron de Breteuil has surprised and disgusted us. But we must have patience. Just now our household is a simple hell, one can say or do nothing with the best intention. The ambition of those about Monsieur will end by ruining him. He thought he was going to be everything, but try as he will, he will never succeed in making himself first."

Poor Marie Antoinette! A year later we find her writing to one of her few remaining friends:

"You may be sure, my dear Lamballe, that all the affection in his—Monsieur's—heart is for himself, certainly not for the king and still more certainly not for me! It has been the grievance of his life that he was not born the

[1] See M. Provins' *Louis XVII.*, p. 59.

master and his mania to be first only increases with our troubles, which give him an opportunity for putting himself forward."

At length even unsuspecting Louis XVI. became so distrustful of his brother that he took every care to keep him in ignorance of his projected flight to Varennes. Only at the very last moment—actually within a few minutes of entering his coach—did he confide to Monsieur that he was about to fly to Montmédy.

M. Eckard of 1792—*not* the Eckard of 1816 (who dipt his recording pen in specially prepared ink to write specially prepared history to suit his royal patron's palate)—the Eckard of 1792, we repeat, has left the following statement amongst his papers. "It was rumoured that there was a plot afoot to sacrifice the King's life in the event of his offering resistance on being arrested during his flight, and to declare Monsieur, Regent of France."

But it is the same story everywhere; whether we consult the memoirs of a regicide like Barère, or the diary of a faithful royalist like the Baron de Coguelat, we find the same evidence.

"The Comte de Provence," exclaims Barère, "is intriguing against the King of France and hastening his fall."

"It is most painful to confess it," writes M. de Coguelat, "but the Princes' cheerfulness increases in proportion to the growth of the dangers and difficulties which beset the unhappy King. They actually seem to find pleasure in his piteous plight and make very light of his sufferings."

Perhaps the most odious act belonging to this period was the signing of Calonne's manifesto by Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois. It was drawn up September 10th, 1791, printed at Brussels, and then spread broadcast throughout France.

"That manifesto," says De Coguelat, "was destined to ruin Louis XVI., by insinuating the most damaging suspicions and inflaming the popular prejudice against the King to the utmost."

The Duchesse de Brissac draws a vivid picture in her

Pages Sombres of the "emigrants" who crowded round the king's brothers. She writes: "Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois are at Coblentz, organising a miniature Court for themselves, a facsimile Versailles on foreign soil. Some of their followers *may* be honestly illusioned . . . but there are plenty of parasites as well. These weathercocks take no account of the royal prisoners in the Temple. It is their business to worship the rising sun, and this they do by heaping every possible form of insult upon Louis XVI."

And all the time, poor Louis was writing the most beseeching letters to his brother, to the Emperor of Austria, to the kings of Spain, Sweden, and Prussia, and to Catharine the Second of Russia, entreating them to abandon the idea of making war on the Republic.

His letter to the Prince de Condé on the subject reads like one long litany, imploring him to make his brothers realise the danger that he—the king—incurred at their injudicious hands.

Alas! it was all in vain!

"The Comte de Provence did not mend his ways," says M. Otto Friedrichs. "Utterly impervious to all appeal, he steadily pursued his own course, as he cynically expressed it, without concerning himself in any way about Louis XVI. or his family. And so the tide of the Revolution rose and rose and rose!"

Ay! truly the foes of his own household were so bent on his undoing, that they turned a deaf ear to the king and the king's friends alike, assuring the latter that the monarch was no longer a free agent and that his letters were dictated by the Commune.

"Never!" cried Coguelat, describing his visit to the princes, "never have I heard any one speak so disrespectfully of His Majesty. They called him a 'poor creature,' a 'log'" (Monsieur had already nicknamed him "Soliveau" in a letter to Favras, 1789), "'a pious simpleton.' Such were some of the insulting epithets that they flung at him!"

What wonder that in those dark days, the poor Queen,

drowned in tears, was wont to apostrophise her brother-in-law as "Cain," who was deliberately compassing their destruction.

And when the worst was done, and the King's head had fallen on the Place de la Révolution, how does Monsieur write to Comte d'Artois? "C'en est fait, mon frère, le coup est porté!" In other words, "It is accomplished, the blow has been struck!"

(We almost hear the joy-bells ringing in that phrase!)

"I hold in my hands the news of the unhappy Louis XVI.'s death, and I have only just time to tell you of it. I also hear that his son is likely to die. Whilst shedding tears for our kindred, you must not forget how advantageous their deaths will be to the State. Let these reflections console you, and remember that next to myself, your son, the Grand Prior, will represent the hopes of the monarchy."[1]

Surely M. Friedrichs is justified in exclaiming, "Now the Comte de Provence saw all his efforts crowned with success, having compassed Louis XVI.'s death quite as ardently as any of the republicans. Surely the Queen's cry of "Cain! Cain!" will echo through the centuries so long as history lasts and the world endures!

But in the face of such evidence, who will hesitate to believe that Louis XVIII., so far from acknowledging the survival of his nephew, would diligently seek his destruction? Moreover, the *émigrés* who gathered round him, and who believed that their only hope of returning to France lay in Monsieur's accession to the throne, were in no way anxious to promote the cause of the rightful sovereign.

"What is not useful, is harmful," they are known to have said, referring to the little prisoner in the Tower, and one and all endorsed the Prince de Condé's dictum, when he declared that "as to the evasion that would only complicate matters."

Was it astonishing, therefore, that on the very day after Louis XVIII. learnt that his nephew had been safely removed from the Temple, he set to work at once to plan a marriage

[1] See *Abrégé de l'Histoire des Infortunes du Daûphin*, p. 140.

between Madame Royale and the Duc d'Angoulême? (He was, as we know, the son of Comte d'Artois.)

He would not only seize the throne for himself, but he must needs barricade its steps with pseudo-heirs so as to stop the way still more effectually against the rightful king.

"All his contemporaries testify to the persistency with which the Comte de Provence was bent on acquiring the crown," says M. Provins, "even during his brother's and nephew's lifetime, whilst history furnishes a hundred proofs of his determined efforts to secure the throne, not only whilst the 'Directoire' was paramount, but even during the Consulate."[1]

Here is an extract from a letter written on August 27th, 1818, by the Comte de Champagnac to one of his friends at Lyons.

"You ask me for details respecting the 'Conventionnel' Courtois, who died at Brussels. . . . Courtois undertook to report on the papers which were left by Robespierre, consequently he became the confidant of all those persons who had carried on a correspondence with the Dictator.

"I have often heard Courtois say that in examining all these documents he found a great many more letters from the royalist leaders trying to come to terms with Robespierre than from republican 'informers.'

"At the time of the 18th Fructidor, I asked him what chance there was of the princes' return to France with Louis XVIII. at their head. This is how he answered me.

"'Do you really believe that Louis XVII. is dead? And don't you know who was the real author of the Revolution? Remember I have seen all the papers, and if you knew all that I know, you would never speak of Louis XVIII. as the rightful heir to the French throne.'

"And," continues the Marquis, "Courtois wound up his remarks by quoting Corneille's words.

"'Do we inherit, my Lord, from those whom we have assassinated?'"

[1] See *Le Carnet*, November 1903, p. 203.

"I often saw Courtois in after years, and he always assured me that the young king did not die in the Temple."[1]

It may not be out of place here to allude to the Thomas Martin affair, of which M. Romanez gives a very good account in his contribution to *La Question de Louis XVII.*

According to all his biographers, Thomas Martin was a highly respectable, hard-working, sober-minded, God-fearing peasant, the very last person, in short, who would be likely to indulge in visions or extravagant dreams of the supernatural.

Nevertheless on January 15th, 1816, he is said to have had an extraordinary experience.

On that day, about two o'clock of the afternoon, a man wearing a long overcoat suddenly appeared to Martin, and told him that he must be the bearer of a message to Louis XVIII. Having delivered himself of his mysterious errand, this strange apparition vanished in the most marvellous manner.

According to Martin, his feet seemed to be drawn up from the ground, his head sank downwards and forwards, whilst the remainder of his body melted into space from his waist upwards!

Greatly impressed by the vision, Martin hastened to communicate it to his parish priest, who promptly told him that he was the victim of the most palpable delusion. He entirely failed, however, to convince Martin on this point, and presently, as the result of investigations instituted respectively by the Bishop of Rouen and the local prefect, Martin was shut up at Charenton, and pronounced to be a lunatic.

But still further inquiries having been made into his case by a doctor, Royer Collard by name, by M. de Larochefoucauld, and lastly by no less a person than the Archbishop of Rheims, Martin was declared to be perfectly sane and was accordingly set at liberty.

It then transpired that in March, Martin had had a

[1] See *Intrigues Dévoilées*, vol. i. p. 129.

second interview with his unearthly visitant, during which the latter had revealed to the peasant that he was the angel Raphael, and that he was endowed with the power to inflict all manner of evils upon France.

Finally on April 2nd, Martin was conducted to Louis XVIII., having been assured by the angel, that as soon as he found himself in the king's presence he would be inspired to remind His Majesty of a certain incident in the latter's past life, which, having been up to that moment absolutely unknown to any one but Louis himself, would instantly convince his royal listener of the genuineness of his mission.

Accordingly, after having given a detailed account of his extraordinary experience to Louis XVIII., who showed himself very sceptical as to the vision, Martin went on to add:

"And now, Sire, I am charged to tell you a secret, namely that at this moment you are occupying a position to which you have no manner of right."

Thereupon, so Martin declared, the King broke in hastily, exclaiming:

"What are you saying? What are you saying? Don't you know that as my brother Louis XVI. and both his sons are dead, I am the only rightful heir to the throne of France?"

"I know nothing about that," replied the peasant sturdily, "but what I do know is that you have no right to be where you are now. And I know something more than that, which I am now going to tell you.

"I refer to a certain occasion, when you were hunting with your brother, Louis XVI., in the Forest of St. Hubert. The King was riding a few paces in front of you, and as you followed close behind him, you determined to murder him then and there!

"There was, however, a certain tree with low-growing branches which overhung the bridle-path you were both following. His Majesty, being mounted on a much taller horse than the one on which you were riding, managed to pass by the branches without any inconvenience, whilst

you, on the contrary, found that they impeded your progress for a moment. Consequently you were hindered from committing the foul deed, which you had meant to execute under that very tree.

"For you will remember that you were carrying a gun with two loaded barrels, one of which you meant to discharge into the King's back, as he rode in front of you.

"The contents of the other barrel you intended to empty into the air, in order to have a pretext for declaring that some member of the suite had fired upon you after having killed the King. All this you deliberately planned to carry out.

"Happily for Louis XVI. those obstructive branches prevented you from realising your guilty scheme, for by the time you had extricated yourself from the tree, the King had rejoined his suite and he was not at your mercy again during the remainder of that day.

"All the same, you cherished your diabolical intentions for a considerable time, and you were always on the lookout for a favourable opportunity for murdering your brother."

Louis XVIII., it appears, was so dumbfoundered by this unexpected revelation that he was overcome by the most violent agitation.

"Oh! mon Dieu! mon Dieu!" he cried, "it is all true, perfectly true, but give me your solemn promise that this terrible secret shall never transpire to any living creature."

"And I did give him that promise," said Martin, "but to it I added this solemn warning.

"Beware," I said, "of ever allowing yourself to be crowned, for if ever you presume to be anointed as King, Heaven will certainly strike you dead during the ceremony."

(It will be remembered that Louis XVIII. never would consent to be crowned.)

"Thereupon," continues Martin, "the King burst into tears and continued weeping till the end of the interview. . . .

"Finally I said to Louis XVIII., 'Get off that throne,

upon which you have no manner of right to be seated, and lose not another hour in despatching proper envoys throughout the Provinces in order to prepare the people for the accession of their rightful sovereign, who will be loved and respected by all his subjects.'

"Upon this, Louis XVIII. promised to make every possible effort to discover the whereabouts of the prince, of whose existence I had assured him, and again he urged me to observe strict secrecy as to what had passed between us."

After that, Martin took leave of the king and returned to his native village.

Many and various accounts of the story have been published since 1816, but they are all necessarily most incomplete.

For the only information that Martin would give to contemporary writers was to the effect that the angel had uttered sundry threats of impending chastisements for France, which her godlessness and immorality had provoked, and he further added that he, Martin, had been charged to impress upon Louis XVIII. his obligations of obedience to the divine commands.

On the accession of Charles X., however, to the throne, the worthy peasant became more communicative, and he then revealed the whole story to the royalist party.

In 1830, after the stormy days of July, Charles X. condescended to ask the advice of this humble seer, when Martin assured him, that even with a far more powerful army than was then at his disposal, he would never succeed in recapturing Paris.

Martin, it appears, was cruelly persecuted by the republicans, who finally forced him to fly from Gallardon, his native village.

It is matter of history, that in his turn, Louis XVII. had an interview with Martin, during his sojourn in Paris.

It is very evident, however, from a letter which the prince wrote to M. Mory on the subject of Martin, that he was extremely surprised and not a little disgusted at the

importance which some of his supporters attached to Martin's evidence in favour of his identity.

"If," wrote Louis XVII., "*I* cannot convince people of my own identity, it is hardly likely that Martin or any one else will succeed in doing so."

In our opinion, however, poor Martin's tragic end affords the strongest and most convincing proof of the real importance undoubtedly attaching to the part he played in the strange and complicated happenings of his day.

For in the person of the hapless peasant prophet of Gallardon, one more victim was placed on the ghastly roll of mysterious deaths, to which at that time, expediency was so ready to add fresh names.

On May 8th, 1834, having unsuspectingly accepted the hospitality of a supposed friend, Thomas Martin was foully done to death, having been first poisoned and then suffocated in the house of his host.

To return, however, from the borderland of the supernatural, to the consideration of more substantial facts.

Striking proofs of Monsieur's treachery in the very early days of his career were furnished by the letters written by him and found on the death of Louis XV. amongst the king's papers.

This evidence of his brother's duplicity rankled long in Louis XVI.'s mind, and probably prompted his notoriously bitter exclamation on a certain occasion, when the royalties had been amusing themselves with a private theatrical performance, in which Monsieur had played the part of Tartufe.

"It was a splendid performance," the king exclaimed, "but then the actors were really impersonating their own characters!"

("Cela a été rendu à merveille, les personnages y étaient dans leur naturel!")[1]

Before closing this subject, however, we cannot refrain from quoting M. Otto Friedrichs' article which follows on

[1] See *Correspondance de Louis XVII.*, vol. i. p. 49.

the heels of that of M. Romanez,[1] for it is much too interesting to omit, even if we run the risk of being blamed for undue repetition of facts.

It is the more valuable for the very reason with which M. Friedrichs excuses himself for supplementing his colleague's article.

"Although my friend, Romanez," he says, "is better informed than I am on all that concerns Martin, I wish to give my own personal opinion as to the value which should be attached to his recognition of Louis XVII.'s identity, because my grounds for forming that opinion are diametrically opposite to those of M. Romanez.

"The latter is a believer, I am a sceptic.

"Though I always feel considerable interest in questions dealing with the supernatural, until I had had a personal experience in these matters, they would never weigh with me in forming an opinion upon material facts.

"All the same, I propose to draw a moral from the Martin episode, which I think will prove acceptable both to believers and non-believers alike.

"Before going any further, let us remember that before Martin was admitted to Louis XVIII.'s presence, he had undergone a searching and exhaustive examination at the hands of the celebrated Doctors Pinel and Royer-Collard at Charenton. Both these men were noted experts in mental cases.

"By these high authorities in the medical world, Martin was declared to be 'sound in body and mind.'"

"Sain de corps et d'esprit."

"Apart from the doctor's verdict, Martin was allowed on all hands to be a highly respectable, God-fearing peasant, bearing an unimpeachable character in his native village for his uprightness and honesty. Clearly, therefore, Martin was neither a lunatic nor an impostor.

"It was on September 28th, 1833, that he met the so-called Naundorf in Paris.

[1] See *La Question Louis XVII.*, pp. 159–161.

"This is how M. Albouys, the ex-judge of Cahors,[1] describes the meeting in an unpublished journal which he wrote for his wife's benefit.

"'Whilst I had gone out to M. Bricon's—a well-known bookseller at that time—Martin arrived.

"'Our friend — Naundorf — had fallen asleep in the room, which is always placed at his disposal in this house, so that when Mdlle. Pitait and Mde. de St. Hilaire's servant, who were ushering Martin into the king's presence, found the latter asleep, they dared not disturb him by introducing the strange visitor.

"'Before they had closed the door, however, my client woke up, and, exclaiming "My dear Martin!" threw himself into his visitor's arms. His emotion at the meeting was intense.

"'The door of his room was then discreetly closed, and the king and the peasant were left alone with each other.

"'On returning from M. Bricon's, I was immediately informed of what had taken place in my absence, and when at the end of another hour, Martin emerged from the king's room, he assured me, that the appearance of the latter coincided exactly with that of the person whom he had seen in his vision.

"'On entering the king's room,' continues M. Albouys, 'he confided to me the most astounding facts, which I am bound not to reveal, but which entirely explain his prompt recognition of Martin and the excessive agitation to which he had fallen a prey at that moment.'

"Now, I need hardly say," goes on M. Friedrichs, "that I attach very little importance to this particular incident, because in meetings of this sort, it is impossible to decide where either emotions or convictions may begin or end, but it is of the highest moment to emphasise three well-established facts, which will undisputably remain as such in history.

[1] We shall have more to say concerning M. Albouys' relations with Louis XVII. in the subsequent pages of this work.

"First, be it remembered that long before Martin had any means of knowing of the existence of Naundorf, he had the courage to arraign Louis XVIII. as being an usurper and was not punished for so doing.

"Secondly, that Martin's recognition of Naundorf's identity with Louis XVII. afforded very valuable support to the cause of the latter, amongst all those who believed in Martin's supernatural experiences.

"Thirdly, and this is in our eyes by far the most crucial of all three points under our present consideration—it must never be forgotten, that rather than yield to the cruel tortures to which Martin was subjected in order to make him retract his statements, the grand old peasant persisted in them, and died a cruel and violent death on May 8th, 1833."

His son, Dr. Antoine Martin, with whom we have the honour to be acquainted, is a very highly esteemed physician, and despite his advanced age is still marvellously active in mind and body.

He is still greatly beloved amongst the poorer classes, upon whom he bestows the most skilful and generous treatment.

To this day, Dr. Antoine Martin solemnly declares that his father was done to death because he persisted in affirming that Naundorf and Louis XVII. were identical, and absolutely refused to retract this statement.

These details concerning the unfortunate Martin's death are corroborated in his report by Dr. Duval.

Indeed the attempts made to coerce Martin to deny the existence of Louis XVII. were so widely known, that we find the Vicomte de Rochefoucauld writing thus to the Duchesse d'Angoulême on June 9th, 1834:—

"I forget whether I mentioned to Madame what I heard respecting Martin's death—namely, that every effort made during his last moments to induce him to retract his statements concerning the individual [*au sujet du personnage*] entirely failed. To the end he persisted in maintaining them."

After reading the above, it is only too easy to understand how necessary Martin's death must have appeared to his persecutors, and all the more so as his testimony to Louis XVII.'s identity carried immense weight with a certain section of the public.

"Finally," adds M. Friedrichs, "in order not to confine these remarks entirely to my own views, I append an extract from an article which is included in a volume of collected prophecies, entitled *La Fin du Temps*,[1] which runs as follows :—

"'The majority of religious people who saw Martin and interested themselves in his history, firmly believed him to be divinely inspired.

"'Amongst these were M. La Perruque, curé of Gallardon, the Bishop of Versailles, the Count de Freteuil, at that time, the Prefect of Eure-et-Loir, Dr. Royer-Collard, senior physician of the Maison Royale at Charenton, M. de Rhoulace Dumaupas, director of the same institution, the Grand Almoner of France, Abbé Dulondel, Comte de Larochefoucault-Doudeauville, the Marquis de Montmorency, and many others.

"'Even those who held very divided opinions as to the peasant of Beauce, shrank from passing open judgment upon the matter, and were unanimous in agreeing that Martin was clearly not a lunatic.

"'But what lends the greatest weight to this question is the report made by MM. Pinel and Royer-Collard to the Cabinet.

"'These gentlemen, after having stated the bare facts, proceeded to pose the three following questions :—

"'1. Is Martin a lunatic ?

"'2. Is he an impostor ?

"'3. Is he merely the tool of certain unscrupulous persons, who are making use of him for their own ends ?

"'They then consider each of these questions in succession with the most conscientious regard for every detail, and finally arrive at the conclusion that every inquiry can only be answered in the negative.

[1] See *La Fin du Temps*, by Collin de Plancy (Paris, Lavigne, 1840).

"'Surely, therefore, in the face of the evidence of such acknowledged experts, we can only conclude that Martin was really and truly inspired.

"'At any rate, that is our conviction, though we should hardly dare to insist on it too boldly.

"'No one, however, we think, can fail to be struck by the remarkable affinity between Martin's experiences and those of Jeanne d'Arc.

"'And after all, why should it appear so incredible that the same Providence, Who saw fit to make use of the heroic peasant girl as the saviour of France, should employ the same method for warning the sovereign upon whose actions the salvation of the country depended?

"'Alas! that those warnings should have proved so fruitless.'"

But perhaps no one has commented so ably and lucidly on the *Affaire Martin* as Balzac.

That astute and deep-thinking writer has brought all his perspicacity to bear upon the question of his inspiration in the following passage:[1]—

"Whenever a mentality remains intact—*reste bloc*—and is not, so to speak, dissipated either in conversation or in a scheme, or in literary or scientific efforts, when it is neither used by politicians or inventors or strategists, that mentality possesses a natural aptness for the dissemination of light, just as the uncut diamond possesses within itself the brilliant gleams which are only dispersed by its polished facets.

"Just so, there are certain rare intellects, which only need a given condition to spread their hitherto folded wings and take flight into supernatural regions, where they see and hear what is beyond the ken of ordinary mortals, just as the black lifeless coal may be transformed under altered conditions into the brilliantly gleaming precious stone.

"Now, educated people who have used their intellectual

[1] See *L'Echo du Merveilleux*, Juin 1er, 1899.

powers in various ways can never, except by special miracle, possess this faculty.

"Hence the diviners and prophets of this world are almost invariably found among gipsies and peasants, the virgin soil of whose mind has never been tilled. As a rule, these soothsayers emanate from the byways and backwaters of life, having neither form nor comeliness which may attract attention or command respect.

"Such a prophet, such a diviner was Martin, the simple peasant, who could make Louis XVIII. tremble on his throne, by revealing a secret known only to that individual."[1]

"At any rate," winds up M. Friedrichs, "whatever may be said for or against the divine inspiration of Martin, one incontrovertible fact remains, namely, that his persistency in maintaining that Naundorf was identical with Louis XVII. cost him his life, and that his murder proved more eloquently than any spoken words could have done, that those who committed the foul deed were themselves fully convinced that the slain prophet prophesied truly."

In connection with Louis XVIII.'s suspected complicity in the matter of the Duc de Berri's assassination, an article contributed to *La Légitimité* by M. Robinet de Clery, as recently as in the April of the present year, makes very interesting reading.

"For once in my life," says the writer in the opening sentence of the first part of his article, "I feel bound to make *amende honorable* to Louis Philippe, whom I strongly suspected of having employed Louvel to clear his path to the crown."

Appearances were certainly very much against him, for

[1] In his interesting book, *Balzac Ignoré*, Dr. Cabanes, alluding to several opinions expressed by the well-known author on the subject of magnetism and occult sciences generally, says :—

"We see that Balzac considered that the strange story of the miraculous experiences of the peasant Martin, which were so remarkably substantiated by his interview with Louis XVIII., was one of those phenomena which go far to undermine the doubts of sceptics and to allure even indifferent people into the region of the supernatural."

See *Balzac Ignoré*, p. 105 (Charles, Paris, 1899).

the Duc de Berri, who was then aged forty-one, was the only obstacle to bar the approach to the throne against the Duc d'Orléans and his descendants.

Moreover, these suspicions were greatly strengthened by the conduct of the Duc de Cazés.

This latter, after having been Louis XVIII.'s prime favourite, promptly became Louis Philippe's creature, thereby rousing great popular indignation.

Indeed, Clausel de Courvergues, one of the councillors in the "Cour de Cassation," officially branded De Cazés as an accomplice in the abominable murder, in a violent speech which he delivered from the Tribunal of the Chamber.

Certainly that murder, as Vicomte de Larochefoucauld remarked, was in no way disastrous so far as the House of Orleans was concerned.

And one of Louis Philippe's first acts on ascending the throne was to have the chapel pulled down which had been built over the spot where the Duc de Berri had been assassinated, whilst he gave wide offence to many by bestowing an office on Louvel's mistress which gave her access to the Tuileries. In my *Deux Fusions* I did maintain that it was not justifiable to accuse Louis Philippe of participating in a crime, when there were no actual proofs to support the accusation, all the same, the most violent suspicions against him were entertained at Court, notably by the Duchesse de Berri.

There is no doubt, however, that these suspicions were unjust. The instigator of the foul deed was certainly not Louis Philippe. To discover the real criminal, we must look even higher than the Duc d'Orléans.

We must direct our attention to the history of the Comte de Provence, whose hatred of his brother, Louis XVI., was very little less virulent than that entertained for the king by his cousin, Philippe Egalité.

Monsieur's detestation of his sister-in-law, Marie Antoinette, was equally violent. This was evinced by the vile slanders against both the king and the queen, which

Monsieur promulgated each time that Marie Antoinette gave birth to a child.

"No one has more extensive or reliable knowledge of Monsieur's history than M. Boissy d'Anglas, who in the person of his relations may be said to have lived through the sinister period of the Revolution.

"On February 28th, 1909, I still shrank with horror from such appalling revelations as he was in a position to make to me."

Louis XVIII.'s conduct, even before the Revolution actually broke out, was unparalleled in villainy, and there is absolutely no doubt that although he may not have literally voted for the king's death, as Philippe Égalité did, no one was more instrumental than himself in sending his brother, Louis XVI., to the scaffold.

It is matter of history that he did his very utmost to incite the people against the "log" (*soliveau*), as he nicknamed the king, and was remorseless in the way that he besmirched the honour of his sister-in-law, Marie Antoinette, with the most revolting and perfidious calumnies.

The part which the Comte de Provence played, after he had been careful to ensure the safety of his own precious person, was that of the most dastardly criminal, whilst words fail to describe his abominably wicked treatment of Louis XVII., of whose existence he was perfectly well aware.

"Louis XVIII.," writes Leopold I., King of the Belgians, in a letter to Queen Victoria, dated November 1st, 1836, "was certainly intelligent, but he was hard-hearted, proud, treacherous, and entirely devoid of all principle."

And when at length this "hard-hearted, proud, and treacherous prince"—we are only quoting the very words of the King of the Belgians—had attained the goal of all his ambitions, when he had made himself King of France and Navarre, when he had returned to the Tuileries after the battle of Waterloo, when he had condemned Maréchal Ney, the hero of a hundred battlefields, to be shot down like a

common deserter ; when her sudden death had relieved him of the Empress Joséphine (who was known to be trying to interest the Czar Alexander in Louis XVII.'s cause), then a foe to his own peace of mind arose unbidden amongst those of his own household in the person of the Duc de Berri, the father of the Comte de Chambord.

(Of the conscientious scruples which led the ill-fated prince to champion the cause of his unfortunate cousin, we shall speak in detail later.)

And so what happened ?

"I will not tell the story," says M. Robinet de Clery, "in my own words ; I will borrow it from the pages of a grand and honest historian, M. Lanne."

The latter had been commissioned to write a book which should demolish the theory of Louis XVII.'s survival from the Temple.

And how did he fulfil the behest ?

After bestowing the most careful study and conscientious consideration on the subject from every possible aspect, M. Lanne felt himself constrained to put forth a thesis maintaining the very opposite views from those he had been urged to establish ![1]

He gives a detailed account of the violent scene which took place between Louis XVIII. and the Duc de Berri (to which we shall have occasion to refer at full length later on) shortly before the duke's assassination.

And he leaves no possible scope for any doubt as to the former's guilty connivance if not *active* participation in his nephew's foul murder.

Other and more recent authors condemn the Comte de Provence as the most despicable of men, the most heartless of brothers, and withal the greatest hypocrite that ever "skulked behind a mask."

But without going beyond the evidence afforded by his own words and letters, and judging him only on their merits, who will deny that Louis XVIII. was duly qualified to

[1] See *Louis XVII. et le Secret de la Révolution.*

occupy a place in the "green room" of the Temple theatre, or, better still, to fill the place of prompter hard by the stage? Later on, we shall have much to say as to how he filled that post and played the part of the "accursed hand that strikes and is not seen."

Let us leave him in his prompter's box for the present, and turn to his worthy accomplice and fellow-usurper, Charles d'Artois.

CHAPTER II

Charles, Comte d'Artois—His knowledge of Louis XVII.'s survival—His confession to De Bruges and to Montchenu—Their advice rejected—MM. Brémond and Monciel approach Charles X. on the subject of Louis XVII.—Madame Royale—Her characteristics as a child—Her vindictiveness as a woman—Deposition made by Veuve Chauvin—Madame Royale's visit to the dead child in the Temple—Madame de Gontaut's statements with regard to the Duchesse d'Angoulême—Baron Seckendorf pleads Louis XVII.'s cause with his sister—Rejection of supposed heart of Louis XVII. by his family—Chateaubriand pleads for the erection of a monument in memory of Louis XVII.—The Duchesse d'Angoulême's heartless attitude towards her brother—"It is all her fault."

THERE is no doubt that the Comte d'Artois aided and abetted Monsieur in the promoting of Louis XVI.'s downfall.

"Like Louis XVIII.," says M. Provins, "when Charles X. became King, he was tormented by guilty fears and apprehensions, which pursued him like haunting nightmares."

Some historians have described him as a feebler reproduction of his predecessor, but though he was less ambitious, less persistent, and a degree less hard-hearted than Louis XVIII., Charles X. possessed a marked personality of his own.

That he was perfectly well aware of Louis XVII.'s survival is an established fact. Abundant evidence is extant, confirming that point.

M. Provins affirms that the reconciliation of the two brothers, which took place at Calmar, when they met to have a private understanding with each other, was entirely due to the secret compact, they made then and there to disown Louis XVII., if ever he should attempt to assert his existence. The actual cause of the disagreement between Monsieur and Charles d'Artois is not known, but for the

five years that Monsieur spent in Russia and the Comte d'Artois in England, they were undoubtedly estranged from each other.

Peuchet, the keeper of the Police Archives, makes certain statements with regard to Charles X.'s knowledge of Louis XVII.'s existence, which, coming from him, claim our consideration.

He tells us that on the death of Louis XVIII., Artois sent for the Comte de Bruges and Montchenu, both trusted friends, and confessed to them that he felt in a very awkward position. Though all eyes turned to him as the natural successor to his brother, he scrupled to accept the crown.

"For, gentlemen, I cannot conceal from you," he said, "that the son of the unhappy Louis XVI. is alive at this moment and should succeed."

Then after dwelling on all the excellent reasons *against* making a public acknowledgment of the rightful king, the wily Artois concluded by asking: "Would it not be wiser, after all, to allow things to go on as they are, and thereby guarantee the peace and prosperity of France, more especially as the succession is secured in the person of my son?"

"Your Royal Highness," replied his advisers, without waiting to confer with each other, "we have no hesitation in saying that in relinquishing the crown to its rightful owner, you would perform an act of splendid justice, and after all it is justice alone that can save and uphold empires."

Needless to state, this advice was not followed.

Readers of Savigny's *Restauration* will find the following statement, which is quite independent of the foregoing one :—

"At the time of Louis XVIII.'s death, Messieurs Brémond and De Monciel (the former had been secretary to Louis XVI., the latter his second minister), were both alive; but being convinced of Louis XVII.'s survival, they had both absented themselves from Court after the Restoration and had gone to live in Switzerland.

"Before Artois was crowned, however, they hastened to Paris in order to confer with him on the subject of the rightful heir to the throne.

"Charles received them very courteously, listened to all they had to say, and replied that although he had no great wish to reign, he was bound to consider the good of the nation, and that therefore he could not take any decisive step with regard to acknowledging his nephew without first consulting his ministers. But he would do so that very day, and promised to give the gentlemen an audience on the morrow. Therewith they were dismissed.

"During the night that followed, however, they were roused out of their sleep by the arrival of a gendarme at their lodging, who ordered them to get up at once and set out on their return journey to Switzerland. By way of seeing them safely over the border, this officer of the law climbed on the box of their travelling carriage and never left them till they reached Dôle."

How far, if at all, Charles X. was implicated in his own son's assassination, it is not our province to inquire, but that he could have been altogether ignorant of the motive that prompted it is doubtful.

We now pass on to the third royal member of the *dramatis personæ* of the Temple theatricals.

It is with mixed feelings that we approach Madame Royale, later the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

If any condition under heaven ever commanded sympathy and compassion, it is that of the poor young daughter of Louis XVI., during her long, lonely imprisonment in the Temple. One by one, her four companions were snatched away from her, three of them to be put to death, whilst the mystery that enshrouded the fate of the fourth was destined to yield her nothing but—shall we say perplexity or—*remorse?*

The Comtesse de Montsauluin, writing March 14th, 1883, says: "I have seen a letter in which it is stated that Madame d'Angoulême confessed to Baron de Maistre, who

was very intimate with her, that 'We are perfectly convinced that my brother did not die in the Conciergerie.'"

(This must have been a lapsus, as she must have meant the Temple.)

"Madame Royale! La Duchesse d'Angoulême!" exclaims M. Provins; what an antithesis those two titles suggest! At the sound of the former, a child's sweet smiling countenance rises before us only to present a harrowing contrast with the sorrow-scarred mask which represented the face of the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

No one can doubt that the cruel blasts of the Revolution which swept over her early girlhood must have nipped much that was inherently gracious and fair in Madame Royale's character; nor is it possible to exaggerate the extent to which her terrible experiences in the Temple must have warped whatever natural good qualities she may have possessed. Though much has been said and sung about the cleansing fires of sorrow and the purifying of gold in the furnace of affliction, it is, alas, equally true that neither fire nor furnace, be they never so hot, will turn alloy into gold, and that unless the metal be proven true before its passage through the crucible of suffering, it will be *tarnished*, not burnished by that process.

So we are not surprised to find that in spite of the gentle face and gracious personality which appear in all the portraits of the little Madame Royale, the child was remarkable from her infancy for her arrogance—which no sorrow could ever tame—her tendency to jealousy, and the extreme coldness of her character.

The spitefulness which as a little girl she evinced against her playmate Juliette Bernard — afterwards Madame Recamier—because the latter was prettier than herself; the burning jealousy she is said to have felt of the little dauphin, whose extraordinary popularity drove his elder sister into the shade, may perhaps have held the germs of that abnormal vindictiveness which must for ever blemish the memory of the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

With the record before us of what M. Turquand describes as the "effrayante cruauté"—her terrifying cruelty—that she displayed in later years, notably in the case of M. de la Valette, whose pardon she might so easily have obtained, or again when she refused to say a single word to save General de Bedoyer's life, and thirdly, when with almost tiger-like fierceness, she insisted on Maréchal Ney's death, it is no hard matter to understand the cold-blooded heartlessness with which she treated her brother.

Her stubborn refusal to yield to his pleadings, pleadings which might have moved a stone, appears only perfectly consistent with the character of Madame d'Angoulême, as depicted by her trustworthy biographers.

We are bound to admit that besides consenting to interview Naundorf's emissary, Marassin—the details of this meeting we give further on—the dauphine did make *some* attempt to trace her brother. For we have reason to believe the following statement, which bears evidence to this fact.

It is to be found in *Mémoires d'un Contemporain*, edited by the false dauphin Richemont, and has been universally accepted as trustworthy, because though the story was published during the lifetime of Veuve Chauvet, it was not contradicted by the latter, as it most assuredly would have been, if the evidence had been "faked."

Its authenticity, consequently, is held to be established.

"I, the undersigned, widow Chauvet de Beauregard, living at Versailles, rue de l'Orangerie, No. 52, do certify that during the trial of Mathurin Bruneau [he was also one of the false dauphins] one of my friends asked me to go to the Hospital for Incurables to interview the woman Simon. We went there together.

"Madame Simon assured me that the dauphin had been taken out of the Temple, that she had seen him since and had recognised him perfectly. She also added that she had received a visit from the Duchesse d'Angoulême. The princess, she said, had given her no notice of her intended

visit, nor had she said who she was on arriving. Moreover, she was so simply dressed that no one could have guessed her high rank. 'She asked me,' said Madame Simon, 'if it were true, that I was in the habit of saying that the dauphin did not really die in the Temple?'

"I answered, 'I have not only always maintained that he did not die in the Tower, but that I have seen him since and recognised him.'

"'Nonsense!' exclaimed the princess; 'how could you possibly recognise anyone who was such a mere child when you last saw him?'

"'Does that surprise you?' I asked; 'what would you say, then, if I told you that I recognise *you* as the dauphin's sister, although you are dressed so simply and although it is much longer ago since I last saw you?'

"'On hearing this,' added Madame Simon, 'the princess turned her back on me and went straight away.'

"The sister who accompanied us to Madame Simon's little cubicle assured us that what she told us was absolutely true, the interview with the princess having taken place in the presence of the Superior. I may add that at that time, Madame Simon was in perfect possession of all her faculties and only suffering from asthma. I declare this statement to be absolutely true.

"(Signed) VEUVE CHAUVET DE BEAUREGARD.[1]

"VERSAILLES, *January 17th*, 1873."

Now, whether Madame Royale was really called upon to identify the body of the child who died in the Temple as that of her brother, or whether she was not, will probably remain one of the vexed questions of History through all time, which will never be satisfactorily answered.

As we have already said elsewhere, there is no difficulty in affirming that she was never publicly and formally called upon to do so.

But according to the evidence contributed by M. Osmond,

[1] See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. ii. p. 94.

in his article entitled "Trois Jours à la Tour du Temple,"[1] it would certainly appear that the young princess *was* taken to see the body of her supposed brother, under conditions of the strictest privacy and the utmost secrecy.

This is how M. Osmond tells the story:—

"Towards one o'clock in the morning of June 9th, whilst Lasne and Damont were asleep, Gomin rose quietly, and, having hastily dressed himself, disappeared through a private door communicating immediately with the deserted basement of the little Tower. Carrying a dark lantern and moving noiselessly in his stocking-feet, Gomin proceeded to climb to the terrace of the Lesser Tower from whence it was easy to gain access to the third floor of the Grande Tower.

"This, as we know, was occupied by Madame Royale.

"Passing through the ante-room, Gomin knocked softly on the princess's door.

"'Who is there?' inquired Madame Royale in a whisper, and though she flew to the door, she was careful not to open it.

"'It is I, Gomin,' was the answer; 'don't be frightened. I have come to tell you that the sad event which we feared might happen has taken place; and you remember, Madame, that you made me promise. . . .'

"The sound of the princess's sobs made it needless for Gomin to say more. But though she wept, Louis XVI.'s daughter was never wanting in courage and self-restraint.

"Did not Napoleon declare in later years, that the Duchesse d'Angoulême was the only *man* in her family?

"Hurrying on her clothes, she hastened to join Gomin in the anteroom.

"'Yes,' she said, 'it was my one wish to pray beside him.'

"'I must remind Madame, however,' said Gomin, 'that in order to afford this consolation to her Royal Highness, I am risking my own head.'

"'And whatever may be my own fate,' was the reply,

[1] See *La Question Louis XVII.*, pp. 18, 19.

'rest assured, my faithful Gomin, that I will never forget this service.'

"Therewith the princess moved quickly towards the door; but Gomin promptly checked her.

"'Gently, gently, Madame,' he urged; 'recollect that if you go that way, we shall be seen by the sentry, who is on duty at the seventh wicket, you must be pleased to follow me.'

"Therewith Gomin led the princess back into her own bed-chamber and opened the door in the inside wall communicating with the little turret which served as a wardrobe.

"Here another small door, the hinges of which had just been carefully oiled, opened noiselessly at the head of a narrow staircase.

"This communicated with a similar turret-wardrobe on the second storey; so having descended the steep steps, Madame Royale presently found herself on the floor, where the dauphin had been confined.

"As Gomin paused outside the door of the prince's death chamber, the poor young girl turned deathly pale.

"'Can I depend on Madame's courage?' Gomin inquired anxiously. 'Can I rely on your Royal Highness's self-control?'

"'Entirely,' was the princess's answer, quickly composing herself.

"'I must, however, prepare Madame,' said Gomin, 'that owing partly to the result of Simon's ill-treatment and partly to the ravages made by his disease, she will find the poor child so terribly altered that she must not expect to recognise him.'

"'No fear!' was the answer; 'I am quite sure that I shall know my own brother.'

"Thereupon Gomin opened the door, and as the full light from his dark lantern streamed upon the little corpse, the princess, stifling a cry with her handkerchief, fell on her knees beside the bed, weeping and praying.

"At length, as she gradually gained courage to gaze on the features of the dead, an expression of agonised doubt

overspread her own face. Rising to her feet, she bent over the lifeless form and riveted her attention upon the closed mouth of the still face.

"But she failed to find the particular mark which she was seeking upon the upper lip.

"'Gomin,' she said, 'my brother had once a little white rabbit, to which he was passionately attached. One day, to his great grief, it was missing. When after a time the rabbit was found and brought back to him, the dauphin was so overjoyed at its recovery that, hugging it tightly in his arms, he covered it with kisses.

"'The rabbit, however, resenting being thus violently squeezed, bit my brother very severely in the mouth. Even after the wound had healed, it left a very noticeable scar in the form of an irregular arch on his upper lip.

"'Is it because my eyes are so full of tears, that I cannot find any trace of that scar now?'

"'No, Madame,' replied Gomin; 'I can assure your Royal Highness that there is no mark such as you describe on that child's lips.'

"'Then thank God!' cried the princess, 'my brother must be alive and is far away from here! As for this poor little victim, God have mercy on his soul. But he is certainly not my brother. Let us go now.'

"'But Madame is certainly mistaken, and it is my painful duty,' said Gomin, 'to undeceive her. These mortal remains are indeed those of her brother, and I must request your Royal Highness to certify them as such by affixing your signature at the foot of this paper.'

"'But how can you ask me to certify the corpse of a stranger as being that of my brother?' exclaimed the princess, 'and what is the meaning of this paper? I thought that this visit was to be enveloped in the most profound secrecy!'

"'That is true,' admitted Gomin, 'but let me explain to Madame that, wishing to protect my own head, I thought it well to sound the Committee of General Safety with respect

to this visit, and this is what one of its most influential members said to me.

"'"You may do whatever you like in the matter, provided that you make Capet's sister certify the identity of the corpse in writing."

"'After all, Madame,' continued Gomin, 'the signing of this paper is a mere form which has no practical value. Moreover, as regards your idea that your brother has made his escape, that is all a delusion, for this is really and truly his body.'

"'If I could sign this paper,' began the princess, 'I would gladly do so for your sake; but no, no, I can't—it would be perjury. Listen to me, Gomin, my brother had a peculiar mark on his chest and also one on his thigh. My mother left a description of these marks in writing. The one on my brother's thigh she used to call the mark of the Holy Spirit, because it was in the form of a dove with out-stretched wings.

"'Now, tell me, is such a mark to be found on this body?'

"And turning her back on the bed, the princess moved to the other end of the room, where she breathlessly awaited the results of Gomin's investigations.

"A few minutes later, unable to produce the required evidence, and finding himself unequal to prolonging the farce, Gomin admitted that no such mark was forthcoming.

"'Madame,' he said, 'we had better make an end of this matter. Your brother is alive, and I will not urge you any further to identify the corpse of a stranger as his. But pray remember that this visit must remain an inviolable secret between us. Not a single creature must ever know that it has taken place, for it is a matter of life and death to me.

"'Madame, swear to me that you will never reveal it to any living person; for remember that I only brought you here for your own sake.'

"'I solemnly promise to keep the secret, Gomin,' replied the princess, 'and you may trust me to ignore both my

brother's official death and also his real survival until I have been formally informed of one or the other.'

"Three minutes later, Madame and Gomin had both returned in safety to the princess's apartments on the third floor of the Tower, and within ten minutes more Gomin was again in bed, where Lasne was still sleeping peacefully.

"As evidence in support of the foregoing statements," M. Osmond proceeds—"statements which may appear to our readers as somewhat extraordinary—I will quote an extract from *La Légitimité*—November, No. 1887—from the pen of M. Ernest de Poulpiquet, which runs as follows :—

"I have just had a rather important interview with one of my relatives, Madame de Carne. The latter told me of a conversation which had taken place on the subject of Madame Royale between herself and her mother-in-law, *née* Briet de Saint-Helier, who died some years ago.

"On this occasion, it seems that Madame de Carne had remarked to her mother-in-law, that no one would ever persuade her to believe that Louis XVII. had really died in the Tower of the Temple. Thereupon, somewhat to her surprise, the old lady replied:

"Well, I have no hesitation in telling you what Madame de Gontaut confided to me concerning that question.

"She assured me that once, in a moment of rare expansion, the Duchesse d'Angoulême admitted to her, that on the death of the child in the Temple, she had been taken to see the little corpse, and had been commanded to identify it as that of her brother. Instead of doing so, however, she had vehemently protested against the imposition.

"'It is not my brother's body,' she declared, 'and I will never identify it as such.'

"(Signed) ERNEST DE POULPIQUET."

"I have had the honour," continues M. Osmond, "of meeting M. Ernest de Poulpiquet, and I feel convinced that his evidence is entirely worthy of respect and consideration. Neither can I see any grounds for questioning the

authenticity of Madame de Gontaut's statement with regard to the evidence furnished by the Duchesse d'Angoulême herself."

There is no doubt that though the latter may honestly have doubted Naundorf's identity with Louis XVII., she was equally convinced of the fact of her brother's evasion from the Temple.

In her *Mémoires*, Madame de Gontaut declares that she had lived in too close intimacy with the royal family to feel herself at liberty to write on certain subjects, for it would be treading very literally on most delicate ground. She mentions, however, that on one occasion, when Madame was travelling from Rotterdam to the Hague, General de Larochefoucauld produced a portrait which was undoubtedly that of Richemont, the false dauphin.

"This, your Royal Highness, is the portrait of your unfortunate brother," the general said, presenting it to the duchess.

That the latter should have given a prompt contradiction to this statement, affords no proof of her disbelief in the survival of Louis XVII. On the contrary, it was just because the princess did feel convinced of her brother's evasion from the Temple, without feeling equally convinced of his identity with Naundorf, that Madame de Gontaut alludes to the point as "a very delicate subject."

Unhappily for herself, Madame de Gontaut betrayed too clearly her own keen appreciation of the extreme delicacy of the question of Louis XVII., for on April 24th, 1834, at the moment when negotiations began between Naundorf and the exiled Bourbons, Charles X. relieved Madame of her post as lady-in-waiting to his niece, and begged her to depart with all speed ("Il la pria de partir vite") !

And it being of vital importance to the Bourbons that Madame de Gontaut should observe a discreet silence upon all that concerned their family secrets, they bestowed a retiring pension on her to the amount of 12,000 francs. This fact in itself goes far to confirm the impression that the

lady was in a position to impart much valuable information on forbidden subjects, were she tempted to do so.[1]

Amongst the many friends who interested themselves either directly or indirectly in striving to procure an interview between Louis XVII. and his sister, was Baron Seckendorf, the Governor of Brandenburg gaol, where poor Naundorf was so unjustly confined as an "impudent rogue." On April 28th, 1836, he wrote a long letter to his widowed sister, Madame de Weissenbach, giving all his reasons for embracing his quondam prisoner's cause and entreating her to make interest with their kinswoman, the Princesse d'Estignac, who was very intimate with the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

The baron implores his sister to put the case before the princess, and to beseech her to do her utmost to persuade the duchess to see the prince, if only for a few minutes.

But Madame de Weissenbach replied that it would be worse than useless to approach the duchess on the point.

"For she is by no means the good and generous person you seem to imagine," writes the lady; "on the contrary, I am assured that though she is so very religious, she is an extremely harsh woman, very imperious and having absolutely fixed opinions of her own."[2]

When we hear of the Duchesse d'Angoulême's maddening obstinacy in refusing to see or hear any proofs tending to confirm the identity of her brother, one can only say of her conduct:

"Errare humanum est, perseverare *diabolicum*."

Speaking of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, the Vicomte de Courson declared, "She is the most sullen and irascible of saints! As to the unfortunate Duchesse de Berri, she pursues her with her hatred."[3]

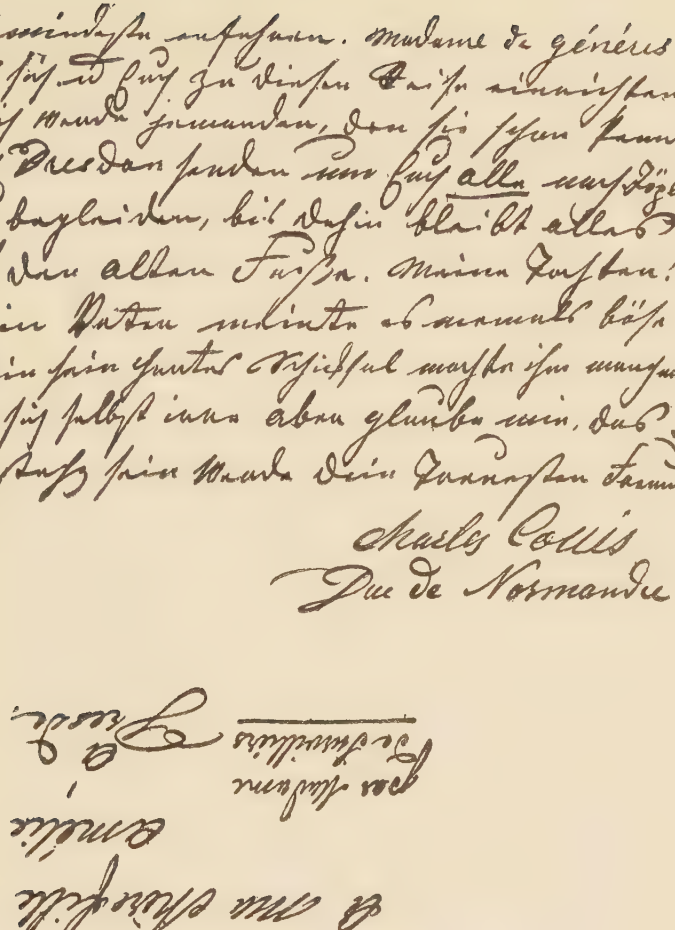
One cannot wonder that in later years, poor Louis XVII.

[1] See *La Question Louis XVII.*, p. 20.
[2] See *Mémoires présentés par M. Gruau de la Barre, dernière pagination*, p. 64.
[3] See *Le dernier effort de la Vendée*, p. 328.

Martres den 2ten Julie 1834

Meine liebe Tochter!

Dein Französisches Briefchen habe ich erhalten u. alles wohlverstanden allein du mußt dich befleißigen die Teutsche Wortfolge aus einem Briefe in Französischen Sprache zu verbannen nun! Es wird schon gehen. Aber arbeite nicht zu anstrengend, wenn es deine Gesundheit nicht erlaubt, denn ein gesunden Körper ist mehr Werth als alle Gelehrsamkeit. Dein Wunsch, Töplitz u. deine Tante zu sehen, soll erfüllt werden, daher übe dich in der Französischen Sprache, denn ich glaube das deine Tante weniger Teutsch als du Französisch verstehet. Doch darf niemand von dieser Reise auch nun



FACSIMILE OF LETTER WRITTEN BY THE DUKE OF NORMANDY FROM CHARTRES, JULY 2, 1834, TO HIS ELDEST DAUGHTER, AMÉLIE, IN DRESDEN

should write thus bitterly to his eldest daughter, Amélie—he had named her Amélie as a touching reminiscence of the name which Madame Royale was made to assume on their flight to Varennes.

"As regards your aunt, she is a woman who has neither a heart nor a soul. I once sought for my sister with my whole heart all the world over, and what did I find?

"A cold, hypocritical woman, professing piety, but one who, after her treatment of myself, it is almost impossible to believe can be the daughter of my mother, Marie Antoinette, Queen of France! I hear she boasts of having proofs with which she can quash all my attempts at proving my identity. . . . I notice that you call her the Dauphine. From this time forward I forbid you to give her that title which she has no right to assume."

Much has been said about the attitude adopted by the dauphine with regard to the supposed heart of Louis XVII., which was offered for her acceptance as a very precious relic of her defunct brother. Our readers will remember that on the occasion of the autopsy in the Temple, Dr. Pelletan abstracted the heart from the little corpse under dissection and, with a view to presenting it subsequently to his family, he preserved it in spirits of wine.

On the return of the Bourbons to Paris, Dr. Pelletan hastened to offer this ghastly treasure to Louis XVIII. in the first place—as in duty bound, he being the head of the house — but he had specially designed it for Madame d'Angoulême's acceptance, feeling sure that she would be overjoyed to possess her brother's heart.

For had he not been the dear companion of her early childhood and her beloved fellow-sufferer in all the trials and sorrows of the Temple?

Having deposited the relic in a beautifully-worked reliquary, the worthy Pelletan proceeded to the palace to make his offering.

But it was promptly rejected by king and duchess, who resolutely refused to accept this proffered gift.

Clearly they were perfectly aware that Louis XVII. was still enjoying the possession of his own heart, and had therefore no desire to be burdened with that of the hapless victim who had died in his stead!

(That poor rejected heart has been quite a traveller, but in these later days, it has found a home with Don Carlos, who accepted it as an heirloom for his descendants.)

In connection with the refusal of this supposed treasure, it is noteworthy that, whereas Louis XVIII. and his family were careful to institute solemn Requiems for Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and Madame Elizabeth, they *never* assisted at any Mass for the repose of the soul of Louis XVII.

Surely this is very significant and confirms what has been stated by many writers, that the great wish of his family was most clearly to obliterate the memory of the dauphin in every possible way.

We find a further very striking instance in the disposition evinced by the "Restoration" with regard to commemorating, or rather *not* commemorating, the name and tragic fate of Louis XVII., in the following passage which we quote from M. Maurevert's article in *La Question Louis XVII.*

On January 9th, the Vicomte de Chateaubriand, addressing the Chamber of Peers on the subject of a monument which Louis XVIII. had proposed to raise to the memory of Louis XVI., made the following appeal in the course of his speech. "And now let us see to it, Messieurs, that we have forgotten nothing in connection with the project.

"Personally, I can detect one very grave omission.

"For what share in this proposed offering prompted by our tears and respect has been assigned to the memory of the child-king, that little martyr, who glorified God in the burning furnace of affliction?

"Is it because he occupied so small a space in our national history that we are already beginning to forget him? Yet how long his short reign must have seemed to him! how interminable those days which were filled with such poignant suffering!

"Never did any aged king bow beneath a more crushing load! never was any sceptre a heavier burden in the hands of any monarch!

"Think you that the crown with which Louis XIV. went down to the grave weighed half so heavily upon his grey head, as the childish diadem of innocence which encircled the infant brow of Louis XVII.?

"And what has become of this royal ward who was given over to the guardianship of a common hangman? . . .

"This hapless orphan, who as a worthy descendant of King David, might well have made his moan in the psalmist's words:

"'My father and my mother have forsaken me.'

"Where is he now? I ask, he who was the companion of the sorrows of the orphan princess of the Temple, her only brother! . . .

"Where may I find him? where may I pursue him with that cruel, and, alas! only too familiar objurgation:

"'Are you asleep, Capet? Get up and answer!'

"Messieurs, he does arise, he does come forth from the glory of that other world, and he asks of you—what?—A tomb!"

And then the great orator concluded his speech as follows:—

"I move, gentlemen, for the adoption of the resolution voted by the Chamber of Deputies, and I only regret that in passing the measure, cheers and applause are prohibited by our regulations.

"I further beg to add the following amendment, by which I consider that we shall complete the expiation which we contemplate with regard to the events of January 21st, 1793.

"'That the King be humbly entreated to sanction the erection of a monument to the memory of Louis XVII., to be raised in the name and at the expense of the French nation.'"

The whole Chamber of Peers voted unanimously for this amendment, and in the *Moniteur* of January 21st, 1816,

in which the whole scheme of expiation was published, the following paragraph appears :

"A monument is also to be erected in the name and at the cost of the nation in memory of Louis XVI., the Queen Marie Antoinette, and Madame Elizabeth."

That "Chapelle Expiatoire" was accordingly erected, and thither the remains of Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and Madame Elizabeth were duly conveyed; but nothing, *absolutely nothing*, was done to commemorate the death of Louis XVII., whose remains (or what was supposed to be such) were left to moulder in the Cemetery of Ste. Marguerite, where Dusser, the commissary of police for the Temple district, had, according to his own showing, evaded the directions of the authorities by having the little coffin buried in a separate grave."[1]

It is also to be noted that when on leaving the Temple, Madame Royale wrote to her uncle, deploring the deaths of her parents and Madame Elizabeth, she made no mention whatever of her brother.

It is, perhaps, comparatively easy if we only think of the tremendous disadvantages under which Madame Royale laboured from her earliest youth to the moment of her death, to find much excuse for her conduct as regards Louis XVII., nor must we forget that he was only one of four individuals who claimed identity with the dauphin.

But all the excuses that we strive to make vanish into thin air, when we read the letters that Naundorf wrote to his sister, brimful with pathetic references to certain passages in their childhood, which none but her own brother could have adduced, and breathing throughout the most agonised prayers to be granted only a few minutes' interview.

With such heart-rending appeals, such moving supplica-

[1] As M. Jules Blois truly says : "Seeing that the Duchesse d'Angoulême was the only being in the whole world who could solve the problem of her brother's identity, the vastness of the responsibility that she incurred in refusing to do so was simply appalling" (see *Correspondance Intime et Inédite de Louis XVII.*, Preface iv.).

tions before us, we can only recall the words of her biographer, who writes—

"Her past sufferings seem to have extinguished every spark of gentleness in her nature and to have killed all sense of compassion for others."

If ever a woman possessed a "withered" heart, surely Madame the Duchesse d'Angoulême was that woman!

With Louis XVII.'s dying cry, "It is all her fault, all her fault!" ringing in our ears, we find it hard to write smooth things of Madame Thérèse de Bourbon.

CHAPTER III

Barras' dinner-party—Sworn declaration of the Marquise de Broglio-Solari—Barras exiled from France—Rapid rise of Bonaparte—Correspondence of Barras with the Comte de Provence—Barras falls between two stools—A gilded Cave of Adullam—Barras returns to France—Extracts from police reports respecting Barras—Barras' papers seized by the Government—Four other actors in the "Private Theatricals" in the Temple: Cambacérès, Harmand, Tallien, Mathieu—The Petit-de Petival Tragedy—Appeal to Bonaparte to prosecute the murderers—Cambacérès' probable association with the crime—A political nettle—Mathieu's suspiciously sudden death.

On a winter's evening in 1803, a dinner was spread in a certain house in Brussels for two invited guests, during the course of which their host made a remarkable statement.

That host was none other than Barras, one of the ex-directors of the French Republic and the fourth member of the dramatis personæ of the Temple Comedy with whom we propose to deal.

His guests were the Marquis de Broglio-Solari and his wife, the ci-devant Catherine Hyde.

She it was who, on July 6th, 1840, made a sworn-declaration as to the words uttered by Barras on this occasion in her presence, in the following terms:

"I, Catherine Hyde, Marquise de Broglio-Solari, formerly attached to the service of H.M. Marie Antoinette and also to that of the Princesse Lamballe, declare herewith, in the presence of John Sise Venn, notary in London, residing at 8 Camberwell street, on July 6th, 1840, that being at Brussels with my husband during the winter of 1803, we were invited to dine with Barras, one of the ex-directors of the French Republic.

"Bonaparte being the topic of conversation between my husband and Barras, the latter, being somewhat heated with wine, exclaimed, 'Ah! I shall live to see that Corsican

villain hung and he'll deserve it, for his ingratitude in banishing me! I who made him what he is. But for all his ambitious schemes, he'll have a downfall yet, *because the son of Louis XVI. is still alive!*'

"This occurred in 1803. At that period the prefect Portecoulant had received orders to allow no one but foreigners to visit Barras. I further declare that my husband and I were present when Barras sold his property at Grosbois to General Moreau. I cite this to show that we were intimate enough with Barras to make him wish to have my husband's signature as witness to this transaction."

"Duly signed and attested by John Sise Venn, notary public, Charles Cosson, Chabron de Jussac, witnesses.

"Legalised by MM. Durant St. André, Consul Géneral of France, and Gauthier, Chancellor."

Why after all his intrigues, all his plotting first in one direction and then in another, Barras finally found himself an exile from France and under police supervision on foreign soil, we have already hinted in Chapter VIII. of Book I.

From the fall of Robespierre in July 1794 till the autumn of 1795, Barras had risen to power and importance with giant strides. But on the famous 13 Vendémiaire (October 5th), he had all unwittingly paved the way to his own overthrow. For he never guessed that when he entrusted the direction of the military operations against the troops of the insurgent sections to Bonaparte, that the young Corsican would date his ascent to power from his triumph on that "Day of Sections," or how, once in command of the army in Italy, he would rise higher and higher to fame and popularity.

It was only when, on his own responsibility, Bonaparte had signed the Peace of Sardinia, that the Home Government realised with a start that the young general was acting on his own initiative, and with an absolute independence of the Directoire.

The letters of ostensible praise, only thinly covering the sharp rebukes underlying that praise, which they de-

spatched to him forthwith, came too late to arrest the mischief. They only incited him to claim undivided authority in military matters and to refuse his submission to the powers at home.

Barras, meanwhile, had been solely intent in plotting and planning for his own personal advantage, and in striving to find the best market in which to barter the valuable secret of Louis XVII.'s survival to the highest bidder.

There is no doubt that, whilst Bonaparte was carrying all before him abroad, Barras was corresponding with Monsieur, and that he even despatched messengers to him, offering to smooth the way for his return to power and reminding him that the rightful heir was still alive, and that he himself possessed proofs of his existence.[1]

Monsieur, however, being well aware that Louis XVII. was no longer in Barras' hands, saw no object in offering a heavy price to secure the regicide's coalition. He therefore turned a deaf ear to him. And so it came to pass that when on September 4th, 1797, Barras was suddenly startled by the news that Bonaparte's troops were already occupying the principal posts in Paris and that the overthrow of the Directoire was imminent, he felt himself literally falling between two stools.

Bonaparte had risen over his head, and Monsieur had no use for his valuable secret!

It was in vain that Barras petitioned his quondam protégé to appoint him ambassador to Vienna, whither he was pining to go in the hopes that the Emperor—who was Louis XVII.'s cousin—might prove a ready customer for his secret wares. Bonaparte steadily refused to give him this post. Finally, when Barras would accept none other, either at home or abroad, the "Corsican villain" drove him into exile.

That the ex-director had lined his pockets fairly well from the national exchequer may be inferred from the recklessly extravagant style in which he lived at Brussels.

[1] See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. ii. p. 155.

If there were ever a gilded Cave of Adullam, Barras' house in Brussels might well be described as such. Thither came all the malcontents and disaffected spirits from every corner of Europe to revel in the hospitality which was so lavishly dispensed.

(Barras' stables, filled with fourteen valuable horses, each attached to his stall by a solid silver chain, were one of the sights of Brussels at that time of day.)

After twenty years of exile, Barras took the bold step of returning to France.

Louis XVIII. was then on the throne and might naturally have driven the regicide back again over the border. But the usurper had his own good reasons for showing leniency to Barras and keeping him under his own eye at the same time.

That the ex-director was narrowly watched by the police is proved by the entries concerning him which are still extant in the National Archives.[1] From one of these police notes, we learn that Barras was surrounded with detectives from the very day of his arrival in Paris. His abode at 18, rue Neuve St. Augustin is carefully noted and a spy shadows him to and from the Café Sabattini. The fact that he frequently visits the Mayor of Vincennes is also reported and evidently causes some anxiety to the authorities.

A later entry in the police records—July 10th, 1825—shows how closely Barras was still spied on.

"Barras," so runs the official's note, "is now residing at 70, rue de Chaillot, and is in possession of very important state papers and letters from Louis XVIII. An adventurer calling himself the Comte de St. Albin introduced himself into this house for the purpose of seeing these documents. I feel it my duty to call your attention to this matter, so that the authorities may lay hands on the papers."

Apparently the authorities did not follow this suggestion, for at Barras' death, January 20th, 1829, the State had

[1] *Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 6826.

seals set on all his effects,[1] for the purpose of *securing any papers likely to compromise the monarchy*, amongst others certain letters from Louis XVIII. A law-suit on account of this action took place in which the State gained the day, with the result that after "due examination of Barras' effects," the general public were informed that "all his papers had been stolen!"

"Yes," says M. Provins, "no doubt they had been carried off to be safely cremated in the Tuileries and to add their ashes to those of the registers which were mysteriously missing from the Temple, to those also of Cambacérès' secret documents and to Fouché's private notes, and those, in short, of every other document which might furnish evidence of the unworthy part taken by Louis XVIII. in the French Revolution. It was well to let these compromising papers end in the smoke of the Tuileries' chimneys."

Hence, however, the explanation of the extraordinary leniency which the monarch showed to the quondam regicide, whose presence in the kingdom he suffered gladly, fully determined to winnow his papers thoroughly, so soon as the breath was out of his body.

Having followed his fortunes, however, even in this rough outline, it is impossible to feel any doubt as to the important part played by Barras in promoting Louis XVII.'s evasion from the Temple or to the fact of his having done so being well known to Louis XVIII.

Grouped round Barras' name are four other actors who shared but less prominently in the *Private theatricals* of the Temple.

These are Cambacérès, President of the Committee of Public Safety, Harmand, whose visit to the deaf-mute in the Tower we have already chronicled, Tallien the regicide, and finally Mathieu, one of the two "Conventionnels" who accompanied Harmand on his visit to the Temple.

Of Cambacérès it is related on good authority that in the course of a conversation with Fabres de L'Aude, author

[1] See *Dictionnaire Historique de la France*, by Ludovic Lalanne.

of *L'Histoire Secret du Directoire*,[1] he said, "My own opinion is that the son of Louis XVI. did not die in the Temple."

"But on what do you base that opinion?" asked Fabres.

"Upon what I know," was the answer, "and what I am not going to say."

"But why not—times are changed now?" urged Fabres, whereupon Cambacérès retorted, "Oh, are they? Men are not changed at any rate."

And though Fabres persisted in his entreaties, Cambacérès was dumb.

Large sums of money, according to Joseph Paulin of Rouen, were paid to both Carnot and Cambacérès to induce them to favour the scheme of the evasion, and the fact that Cambacérès' papers were all stolen from him by order of Louis XVIII. proves that he was known to be in possession of certain facts likely to compromise the usurper of the throne.

That Bonaparte also had good reason for regarding Cambacérès as an individual whom it was advisable to placate is evident from the way in which he treated the Petit de Petival affair.

The details of this tragedy furnish some of the sorriest reading associated with the secret of Louis XVII.'s evasion.

Seldom have we met with anything more terrible or less widely known than the story of the wholesale slaughter (we can use no other word) of the unfortunate Petit de Petival family.

The horrible tragedy took place at their own chateau at Vitry, not far from Paris, on April 20th, 1796.

"There is no doubt," says a journalist, writing a few days after its occurrence, "that it was done by order of the Government and *because the Dauphin is not dead*."[2]

The head of the family had been formerly ambassador to China, but he had lived peaceably in his castle at Vitry throughout the whole of the Reign of Terror.

[1] See *Gazette Française*, April 24th, 1796. [2] *Ibid.*

Here is an extract from a contemporary paper, describing the ghastly incident:—

"For the last two days, every one has been talking of the dreadful murders that took place at Vitry, a little village in the neighbourhood of Paris. The details are not well known, but so much is certain that the citoyen Petival, the owner of the castle, was living there with his family, when on the 2nd of this month, an hour after midnight, some strangers —how many is not known—found their way into the castle and began by murdering M. Petival's mother-in-law.

"To reach her bed it was necessary to push a smaller one aside, in which a child was sleeping. Happily the child did not wake up, otherwise it would have been certainly murdered too.

"The wretches then went to M. Petival's room and commanded him to get up at once, saying that they were under orders to arrest him.

"They did the same by two ladies who were staying in the castle with their maids. Having collected the four women together, they marched them out into the park, with M. Petival at their head.

"They then fell upon this little group of five persons and butchered them all. One of the ladies had her head cut off; M. Petival was clubbed to death. No one was robbed.

"The Jacobins accuse the soldiers of having committed these murders, but respectable people declare that though they may have worn soldiers' uniform, they were certainly nothing of the sort."[1]

The assassins were never discovered.

"For of course," says Madame Junot, afterwards the Duchesse d'Abrantès, who was very well posted as to the particulars of this horrible business; "of course the murderers were well taken care of by the Directoire, for no one doubted that the crime was committed for purely political purposes."

Though there was an abundance of valuable plate in the

[1] See *Rapport*, fait au nom de la 3eme commission. Paris, 1911, p. 150.

castle, and gold watches and handsome jewellery were lying about in the poor ladies' rooms, not a single article was stolen. Nothing was taken except—*all M. Petival's private papers!*

As Madame Junot very significantly remarks, "It was very clumsy of them not to steal some of the valuables."[1]

Although ostensibly some attempt was made to prosecute the criminals, and for a few days there was a great talk about the legal proceedings to be undertaken by the public prosecutor, it all ended in smoke, the whole matter being—so it was officially announced—involved in impenetrable mystery.

But the memory of that wholesale butchery was not suffered to slumber altogether.

For years after, during Bonaparte's consulate, M. de Bois Bréau, a member of the Petival family, appealed to Bonaparte for steps to be taken for the discovery and punishment of his kinsfolk's murderers. And on the occasion of this appeal (as so often happened in cases which were in any way connected with Louis XVII.), Joséphine threw herself into the breach and strove to enlist her husband's interest in De Bois Bréau's suit.

But even had the First Consul been disposed to fish in such troubled waters, a prosecution at that time of day was quite out of the question. For all the official papers relating to the case had been either destroyed or stolen, as well as all the police reports.

And even had they been to hand, De Bois Bréau's suit would certainly have fallen through in spite of all Madame Bonaparte's intervention. For staggered as Bonaparte was by the enormity of the crime, and genuinely horrified that no steps had been taken to trace the murderers, he was evidently tied and bound by some mysterious promise to Cambacérès.

"I have promised Cambacérès," he muttered more than once by way of excuse for refusing to take any active measures in the matter.

[1] *Memoires de Madame la Duchesse d'Abrantès*, vol. iii. p. 73.

What had he promised to Cambacérès, and why?

We may make a fairly shrewd guess at the possible answers to both these questions, when we remember that in 1796, when the crime was committed, Cambacérès was President of the Committee of Public Safety and also a member of the Directoire, that vilest form of government that ever disgraced the administration of any civilised country.

Louis XVII.'s connection with the De Petival family has never been satisfactorily explained, but that there must have been strong cause for the seizure of all M. Petival's private papers is beyond dispute. Some writers believe that it is most probable that the prince found a temporary shelter in the castle of Vitry immediately after his evasion.

At any rate, we know that a year later he was hidden for several weeks in the Chateau Tort de la Sonde.

This fact Bremond affirms on oath.

"M. Tort de la Sonde," he says, "was a personal friend of mine.

(At the beginning of the Revolution, Tort de la Sonde was one of Louis XVI.'s most able diplomatic agents.)

"In 1820, being in Paris, I met one of his nephews, who told me the following facts:—

"'In 1797, when I was staying in my uncle's house, after a short absence he returned home, bringing with him in his closed carriage a boy of about ten or eleven years old. He had fair curly hair and a very handsome face.

"'My uncle addressed him as Monsieur Auguste, and put him into his own room, where he always stayed all day.

"'At the end of a few weeks my uncle went away in the night, taking the child with him. Shortly afterwards, he returned home alone.

"'"You have had the good fortune to see the young Dauphin," he said to me, "*but keep the secret!*"'"[1]

It was reported that one of the unfortunate ladies who

[1] *Déposition de Bremond devant le Tribunal de Vevey.* See *Rapport*, p. 158, fait au nom de la 3ème commission. Paris, 1911.

were murdered at Vitry was a Madame Soucy, who had just returned from Vienna, whither she had been despatched in charge of Madame Royale.

This proved to be incorrect, but it is rather suggestive that the name of any one so closely connected at that moment with the daughter of Louis XVI. should have been mentioned at all in connection with the tragedy.

As for Harmand, there is no doubt that he knew all the details of the evasion from the Temple as well as the substitution of the two children.

So did Tallien, who although formally exiled as a regicide and supposed to be living in Bavaria under the name of Lambert, was nevertheless allowed to remain quietly in Paris, where no one dared interfere with him. Clearly he was a political nettle, with whom the authorities had no wish to meddle.

As regards Mathieu, his sudden death at the very moment when the police learnt that Louis XVII. was seeking for those who had helped him in his evasion, suggests only too obviously that being an "undesirable" in the eyes of the Government, they dealt with the poor wretch accordingly.

CHAPTER IV

Hoche, De Frotté, Pichegru, Joséphine de Beauharnais—General Hoche—His mysteriously tragic end—General de Frotté—Baron de Thierry's letter in English *Times* — Joseph Paulin — Three chief actors in accomplishing Louis XVII.'s evasion—Pichegru—His obscure origin—Strangled in the Temple prison — Joséphine de Beauharnais—Her chequered career—Napoleon's *Mémoires*—Extract from M. Las Casas' *Journal* — Napoleon's statement concerning Joséphine's knowlege of Louis XVII.'s survival—Extract from the *Memorial of St. Helena*—Letter from Maria de Wagner—Madame de Saint-Hilaire's statements —Marquise de Broglio-Solari's formal declaration with regard to Joséphine's knowledge of Louis XVII.'s evasion — Extract from Savignez's work—Joséphine regarded as a dangerous enemy by the Comte de Provence.

HOCHE, De Frotté, Pichegru, Joséphine de Beauharnais!

Here are the names of four individuals, and over the fate of each a lurid cloud of unsolved mystery will hover so long as history lasts. To begin with General Hoche, who was commandant of the republican forces in the west of France.

Amongst all his contemporaries, Hoche was the one bright example of an upright, high-souled, disinterested republican, who, however mistaken he may have been in his views, was actuated by the love of his country and not by any greed of place or advantage to himself. He was the one "little candle" to throw its beams on the "naughty world" of his day. There is no doubt that he was in the secret of Louis XVII.'s evasion, and that Barras confidently reckoned on his connivance when the time should come for deceiving the loyalists of La Vendée with the lying announcement of their young king's death. When that moment did come, however, Hoche proved to be less malleable than Barras had expected.

True, he had countenanced the removal of the prisoner from the Tower, but his motives in so doing were purely

impersonal and public-spirited. It was in order to save his country from committing a fresh crime which would leave an indelible stain on its national character that Hoche had lent his help to the intrigue, because that was the best way, he considered, of serving the cause of France, the cause to which he was passionately devoted. But any form of dissimulation was abhorrent to his honourable, straightforward nature.

Such being his character, Hoche must have felt a supreme contempt for Barras' mean, self-interested double-dealings, and he may possibly have betrayed it; whilst on his side, Barras must very soon have realised that he had selected the wrong material for his purposes, in admitting Hoche behind the scenes of the Temple comedy.

The fact that the young general was bent only on serving his country and not on identifying himself with any party must have filled Barras with vague apprehensions. What if Hoche should use his dangerous knowledge for the thwarting of Barras' own schemes and plots?

And as there was only one method of averting that peril, only one seal, the cold seal of death, which could effectually close those lips, Barras had no scruple in employing it. The mowing down of this promising young soldier in the morning of his life must have seemed a small matter to the man who had already cleared away so many human obstacles from his path of ambition and intrigue!

At any rate, when Hoche sickened suddenly and died of a mysterious complaint, which was vaguely described as an "affection of the stomach," no one hesitated to declare that he had succumbed to the effects of poison. That was the only explanation given at the time of the general's death, and it was never contradicted.

But who gave the fatal dose, and how, will never be known to history. On this point we are left to form our own conjectures.

Still more tragic was the fate which befell General de Frotté.

"General de Frotté," says M. Provins, "represents the purely royalist element in the group of the little king's deliverers."

For three years he had toiled unremittingly to discover some means of rescuing the child from his enemies' hands, for though there is no trace in his papers to suggest that he took an active part in promoting the evasion, there are ample grounds for supposing that he did.

"As for Frotté," says M. Otto Friedrichs, "he certainly knew that a child had been substituted in the place of Louis XVII."

On December 8th, 1835, a remarkable letter appeared in the *Times* headed "To the Editor of the *Times*."

DEAR SIR,—In your issue of yesterday, there was a long article on "The Misfortunes of the Dauphin." One of the principal agents who were employed to snatch the Dauphin from the Temple was the Comte de Frotté, a General of La Vendée, with whose family I am connected, my sister having married his brother. Consequently I have had the means of knowing for a certainty that General de Frotté was chiefly instrumental in promoting the evasion of the Dauphin, as well as his subsequent flight to La Vendée.

It was in La Vendée that De Frotté organised that war which was so celebrated in French history.

When Napoleon became First Consul, he entered into negotiations with the Count in order to establish peace throughout the provinces. He then promised the General, that if he would restore tranquillity throughout La Vendée, he would give him a safe-conduct and the permission to settle anywhere that he might choose in France.

These terms were accepted by De Frotté, who chose Paris as his place of residence.

On his way thither, however, his progress was suddenly arrested near Verneuil, and though he actually had his passport in his hand, the Count was seized and dragged from his carriage, and then and there barbarously shot down.

I defy any one to contradict this statement. But why, I ask you, should the ruler of France be guilty of such atrocious treachery?

Why should Bonaparte have so flagrantly violated all the laws of justice and humanity, if he had not known that the Count knew well where the Dauphin was in hiding, and if he had not been determined to destroy all trace of an existence which, if known, would prove fatal to the realisation of his own schemes?—Yours faithfully,

BARON DE THIERY.

4 CLEVELAND SQUARE,
ST. JAMES', LONDON,
Dec. 4th, 1838.

Valuable evidence, pointing to General de Frotté's share in Louis XVII.'s evasion, is furnished by the following passage, which we extract from *Les Intrigues Dévoilées.*

It is a deposition made by Joseph Paulin, the faithful workman who brought the gold coins to Louis XVI. in the Temple. This is how it runs:—

"In 1795 I still belonged to the society which had been formed originally to rescue King Louis XVI. from his murderers. Having failed in that endeavour, we were the more anxious to save his son from the guillotine. We made enormous sacrifices in order to induce Cambacérès and other influential persons to favour our plan. I constantly carried large sums of money to them, by order of General Frotté.

"Madame de Beauharnais also knew all that we were doing, and helped us greatly.

"On the 20th of June, 1795, I was at Rouen with Comte de Frotté. He told me to go to a certain Mère Paultier—she sold vinegar—who lived in the Rue Martin-Ville, who would transmit some gold coins to me which I was to convey to Paris. On reaching Mère Paultier, she gave me a leather waistcoat, which she bade me to put on. A sum amounting to 48,000 francs in gold had been sewn inside the lining of the waistcoat.

"Wearing the precious garment, I proceeded to Paris, where I found the Comte, who had gone on before me.

"The General told me that all the preparations for the removal of the Dauphin were already made.

"There were three of us who were actually concerned in the carrying off of the child, but I cannot name either them or all those who helped us, because I am bound by oath not to do so."[1]

It does not appear that Comte de Frotté was one of the three, who are believed to have been Paulin, M. Castel de Grand-Maison, and the Marquis de la Roche-Aymon. As regards the latter, Madame de Lignac (who was the head of a religious community at Tours) gave written evidence, which was produced when Jules Favres made his famous "procés d'appel," to the effect that a certain gentleman, whose daughter was in her school at that time, told her that he had had the honour of helping in Louis XVII.'s evasion.

That gentleman was known afterwards to have been the Marquis de la Roche-Aymon.

Following the bright examples of these two real martyrs in a good cause, Pichegru cuts but a miserable figure. Born of obscure parents, he first attracted attention soon after the fall of the Bastille by his violent behaviour in support of the Republic at Besançon.

In time, he found his way into the army and served under Hoche. Later still, as General Pichegru, he achieved the easy conquest of Holland, and was decorated with the titles of "Liberator of the Republic" and the "Saviour of the Country."

There is no doubt that he lent his aid in forwarding Louis XVII.'s evasion from the Temple, and it is more than likely that his services were remunerated in hard cash.

If so, Pichegru made a bad bargain. For on February 28th, 1804, having brought himself under notice by the share which he took in George Cadoual's conspiracy, Pichegru was arrested and confined in the Temple prison. As he was

[1] See *Déposition* dictated by Joseph Paulin, *Les Intrigues Dévoilées*, vol. i. pp. 575–579.

known, however, to be in possession of important secrets, Bonaparte took very good care that he should not appear before the judges in an open court.

Here again was another mouth which must be closed at all costs.

So Pichegru was strangled in the Temple, but by whose direct orders the dark deed was done was never definitely stated.

It is with some tenderness and a great compassion that we approach the subject of Joséphine's share in the Temple comedy.

The adored friend of the chivalrous young Roche, the idolised mistress of the sordid, self-seeking Barras, the unhappy wife of the cold-hearted, calculating Emperor, Joséphine's career was indeed a mosaic of darkness and light, sunshine and shade.

Certain incontestable proofs and striking evidence supplied by her contemporaries, certain circumstances in her life, certain events that took place at Malmaison, the well-established fact that she spoke of Louis XVII.'s accession to power, all combine to furnish the most remarkable support to the theory of Louis XVII.'s survival from the Temple.

"The *Mémoires* of Napoleon," says M. Provins, "exist in two forms.

"The first are those *Mémoires* which he dictated himself to his secretaries and revised with his own hand, the authenticity of which cannot be disputed. The second form consists of journals compiled by persons in his immediate entourage, and based on notes actually written by Napoleon or by his secretaries.

"The *Memorial of St. Helena* represents the direct outpouring of the Imperial mind, whilst the *Mémoires* by Baron Lamothe-Langon, former Councillor of State, reproduce his indirect communications.

"But it must be remembered that the Baron derived all his information from Baron Guillaume Peyrusse, Chancellor of the Imperial Treasury, who, from 1809 to 1815, never left the

Imperial household for one single day. Moreover, Peyrusse was one of the very few high officials who accompanied his master to Elba, returned with him to Paris, and followed him in his Belgian campaign."

Here is an extract from M. Las Casas' *Journal*, who was with Napoleon at Elba.

"Joséphine," he writes, "looking forward to the future, was tormented by the prospect—which she knew to be a certainty—of having no child to inherit the Imperial throne. Though she had married with the full knowledge of this fact, she had hoped against hope, and had done everything in her power to compass her heart's desire. When she ultimately realised that all hope on that score was vain, she often hinted to her husband that she could 'put him on the scent of a huge political fraud.'

"Finally she ventured to unfold to him a scheme for dealing with the imposition."

The "huge political fraud" was the false allegation of Louis XVII.'s death in the Temple, whilst the scheme that she proposed to Napoleon was, that he should officially resuscitate the child who had been rescued from the Tower.

Was it not the best means that her wit could devise for averting the bitter cup of divorce, which was so perilously near her lips, and for effecting a reconciliation between the old France and the new?

On his side, M. Lamothe-Langon writes, quoting Napoleon's own words: "It was asserted that the Dauphin had been rescued from his prison with the consent of the Committee, and that another child, substituted for him, had been sacrificed as a victim to their odious intrigues. Joséphine considered herself very well posted in the whole affair, and often spoke of it to me. She told me exactly who had taken charge of the Prince, where he was in hiding, and when it was intended to bring him before the public.

"I used to listen to her with a shrug of the shoulders, wondering how she could be so credulous.

"Later, however, being determined to know the truth of

the matter, I examined the official reports on the subject, and was startled by the sentence, 'A corpse was shown to us, which *we were told* was that of the Dauphin,' which was tantamount to saying that they could not guarantee that it was actually his body. Neither did I find any other certificate to confirm the fact.

"Upon this I instituted investigations at the spot in the cemetery where the corpse was said to have been buried.

"We found the coffin in fairly good preservation, but when it was opened in the presence of Fouché and De Savory, it was empty!"

Do not each of these passages, taken from the same source but written by different hands, afford an excellent complement to each other? The following extract from the *Memorial of St. Helena* suggests that Napoleon must have been in the secret of the Dauphin's evasion long before he married Joséphine.

(Almost as soon as Napoleon became acquainted with Madame de Beauharnais he spent nearly every evening with her. Her house was then the most popular rendezvous in Paris.)

"After the ordinary guests had gone, M. de Montesquieu, the Duke de Nivernais—so well known for his wit—and a few others always remained behind.

"We always looked to see if the doors were closed, and then we used to say, 'Now let us talk of the old Court. Let us make a tour to Versailles.'"

The Emperor, however, was not the only person to whom Joséphine confided her secret. She told it to many others; witness the following letter written at Rome, February 14th, 1874, by one Marie de Wagner, *nee* Balabine.

"Prince Repnine," says the writer, "the son of the Field-Marshal of that name, affirmed that he had heard from Joséphine's own mouth on the occasion of his introduction to her, that the son of Louis XVI. was still alive. I have my mother's authority for stating this. My sister married the son of Prince Repnine, and in our family circle he

constantly alluded to the remarkable evidence furnished by Joséphine on the subject of Louis XVII.'s survival."

Again, Madame de Saint-Hilaire, one of her ladies-in-waiting, declares that Joséphine "often spoke to me of the child whom she had helped to rescue." And a letter written to the Duchesse d'Angoulême by Madame Saint-Hilaire, September 9th, 1833, contains some very plain and forcible statements on this point.

"It is impossible," runs one passage, "not to recognise him as Louis XVII. from his striking resemblance to his august parents. . . . Kneeling at your Royal Highness's feet, I implore you with all the respect that I owe to you, to forgive me for daring to address you, but God, my conscience, and the hope of my salvation urge me to warn you that your unhappy brother is alive, and that he is with us, and I assure your Royal Highness that I believe in the indentity of this unfortunate prince, *as I believe in God and His Divine Son, the Saviour of the world.*" She also adds that having had the honour of being intimate with the Empress, the latter had often taken her into her confidence with regard to Louis XVII.

In another letter from Madame de Saint-Hilaire, we find her writing, viz. :—

"At the time when I was attached to Joséphine, wife of Bonaparte, I learnt for a certainty that her love and respect for the Bourbons had led her to conspire with Fouché to rescue Louis XVII. from the hands of her cruel husband. For the latter had resolved on his ruin, directly he found himself within sight of the fulfilment of all his hopes, namely, the proclamation of the Empire."

The Marquise de Broglio-Solari's formal declaration with regard to Joséphine's knowledge of Louis XVII.'s survival is very valuable.[1] It was evidently made at the same time and place and in the presence of the same notary as the declaration which we have already quoted elsewhere in reference to Barras.

[1] See *Plaidoirie de Jules Favres*, 1874, p. 75.

Madame Joubert's Declaration

"I, Catherine Hyde, formerly attached to the service of H.M. Marie Antoinette and to the Princess de Lamballe, do hereby declare on oath, that having spent some time with Hortense, Queen of Holland, at Augsburg in the year 1819–1820, in the course of several conversations she entirely confirmed my impressions with regard to the Dauphin's evasion from the Temple.

"Amongst other facts, she told me that when on the occasion of the visit of the Emperor Alexander of Russia and the King of Prussia to Joséphine at Malmaison, they asked, 'Who shall we set on the throne of France?' Joséphine promptly replied, 'Why, the son of Louis XVI. of course!'"

Here is an extract from Savigny's work, *The Restoration Convicted of Hypocrisy, Lies, and Usurpation.*

"Strongly attached by my royalist affections to Louis XVI., I have followed closely all that concerns the unhappy victim of our miserable feuds. At the time when the Dauphin's death was proclaimed in Paris, my sister informed me that it was an untrue report. For having had the advantage of being received by Madame de Beauharnais, the latter had told her with her own lips that the Dauphin did not die in the Tower, but that on the contrary, she had seen him with her own eyes on the day that he was rescued from the Temple. Consequently, I am not at all surprised by the facts that are now being published, for I have always known that the son of Louis XVI. did not die in the Temple.

"This declaration is made on oath in the presence of Madame S. de Montrouge.

"Signed, A. H. Houlot, Femme Joubert, born March 25th, 1767."

It was only natural that if the royalists, as represented by Louis XVIII.'s party, had received hints of Joséphine's intention of revealing the existence of the rightful king (in whom she had taken so much interest from the time of Barras' temporary triumph), she was liable to suffer the direst consequences at their hands.

For what revelations could be more unpropitious to the returning Comte de Provence, who was at last on the point of climbing to the throne, for the attaining of which he had sacrificed so many lives and perpetrated so many dark deeds?

If now Joséphine intervened with her unwelcome proofs of his nephew's survival, what would become of all the glittering spoils which lay at last within his reach?

No wonder that Paul Lacroix, the Bonapartist historian (who probably knew nothing of the by-play connected with Louis XVII.), made the following statement :—

"Joséphine is always surrounded by detectives, and the king has been warned that his most dangerous enemy is to be found at Malmaison."

How and why should Joséphine be Louis XVIII.'s most dangerous enemy, unless it was because she was known to possess the secret of Louis XVII.'s survival?

It is quite certain that Louis XVIII. must have been well aware of the active part that she took in promoting Louis XVII.'s evasion, for evidently Barras was at no pains to conceal it during the latter years of his own life.

For in 1824, meeting with Madame Delmas, he exclaimed, "What cruel injustice has been shown to the martyr-prince!" adding that Joséphine and himself had been the principal agents in securing his escape.[1]

[1] See "Déposition of Madame Delmas," *Les Intrigues Dévoilées*, vol. i. p. 576.

CHAPTER V

Memoirs and Recollections of a Peer of France — Joséphine makes dangerous revelations to the Czar of Russia—Princess Woronzow's remarkable evidence—Extract from the *Monde Illustré*—Joséphine's "terrifying secret"—Joséphine's death attributed to poisoned bouquet sent by the Comte de Provence—Information derived by Dr. Carro from Sir James Wylie—Extract from *Souvenirs du Vicomte de Reiset*—Details of Joséphine's illness—Her last hours—The author of the tragedy—Joséphine accused of abstracting two million pictures!—Her papers ransacked.

In a certain book, entitled *Memoirs and Recollections of a Peer of France,* supposed to have been written by Comte Fabre—De L'Aude—who was intimately acquainted with Joséphine, the following passage occurs.

(It refers to a summons which had been received by the writer from the ex-empress, who wished for his advice on two points.)

"The first matter," says the writer, "was so important and necessarily involved such serious results, that I besought Joséphine not to employ me in the affair. Indeed, I entreated her not to compromise herself in it in any way. I tried to make her realise what dangerous consequences must ensue from certain revelations, which she was determined to make, as well as the far-reaching results of such an exposure of facts, which it would be impossible to overrate.

"I told her that if I were to afford her the help that she asked of me, I should infallibly ensure my own certain ruin.

"Though my vehement protests provoked a melancholy smile from her, she would not listen to my advice.

"'I see that I was wrong in trying to force you into such a painful position,' she said, 'and in asking your help I overtaxed your devotion to me. After all, it is not my own affair, and I am well aware that I cannot mix myself up in it, without exposing some of my household to certain risks.'

"Thereupon I renewed my entreaties that she would abandon her project, flattering myself that in the end I should prevail upon her to burn the documents that she had laid before me, and which contained certain secrets, important enough to upset the whole of Europe had they been brought to light. My endeavours, however, were all in vain.

"'My mind is made up,' Joséphine said, 'and I shall confide my secret to Emperor Alexander. As he is a very just man, and most anxious that everything should be placed on a right footing, I feel sure that he will identify himself with the cause of this unhappy youth.'

"I could protest no further.

"Joséphine was as good as her word. She revealed the tremendous secret, which should never have passed her lips —for, after all, she may have been misled into believing what was not true—and her unexpected death, which followed so rapidly upon this imprudent step, led to the suppression of a thrillingly interesting communication, but at the same time it relieved the world of a very dangerous informant." [1]

"That Joséphine did really and indeed confide in the Czar," says M. Otto Friedrichs, "I possess many irrefutable proofs. Here, to begin with, is the following declaration, hitherto unpublished, which I owe to my venerable and regretted friend L'Epine, that witty writer, so well known under the pseudonym of Quatrelles, given him by Princess Woronzow, *née* Troubetzkoy.

"This evidence, which I transmit verbatim, stands out in strong relief amongst the many versions already published of Joséphine's share in the evasion of Louis XVII., and of her confidential relations with the Czar.

"'During Alexander the First's stay in Paris in 1814, he received a very urgent letter from the Empress Joséphine imploring him to come to Malmaison at once, as she wished to have a private conversation with him on a matter of life and death.

"'My father, Prince Troubetzkoy, his General aide-de-

[1] See *Mémoires et Souvenirs d'un Pair de France*, vol. iii. pp. 418–419.

camp, accompanied the Emperor. He remained in one of the salons whilst the interview was taking place in her private room between the Empress and the Czar. When the Emperor came out and had returned to his carriage, he said to him:

"'"Oh! my dear Troubetzkoy, what would I give to be able to tell you what I have just heard! It is a *terrifying* secret, and I am burning to tell you, but I have taken an oath that I will never reveal it to any one."

"'If it was not actually on the next day, it must have been only a very few days later that the Empress died. Many people believed that she had been poisoned.

"'These facts I heard from my father's own lips.

"'Signed, Princess Woronzow.'

"For the further corroboration of this important evidence, which the daughter of the Czar's aide-de-camp wrote down for me, I will add what appeared in the *Monde Illustré*, September 15th, 1868, with reference to the interview between Joséphine and Alexander I. respecting Louis XVII.

"'Joséphine's sudden death—unnaturally sudden some people say—occurred most opportunely for Louis XVIII., as she was quite bent on placing an obstacle in his way to the throne. However incredible the story may appear, I have been assured of its veracity by persons whose good faith is above suspicion, and only last year Prince T——, who is very highly thought of at the Russian Court, assured me that he knew that it was positively true.

"'The terrifying secret which Joséphine confided to the Czar, and which he was burning to divulge, cost the Empress her life. For at the time of her death, every one attributed it to the effects of poison, and openly accused Louis XVIII. as the culprit, and declared that the survival of Louis XVII. was the cause.'"

Here, for instance, is what Labrade de Fontaine, the librarian of the Dowager Duchesse d'Orléans, writes:—

"The beautiful Joséphine's sudden death the very day after she had solicited the Czar's support for the Duc de

Normandie was attributed to the effects of a poisoned bouquet which had been sent to her that day by the Comte de Provence."

Elsewhere, the same author says that Joséphine revealed the fact of Louis XVII.'s existence to Alexander I., and he adds, "Though the communication was strictly private, some one must have found out about it, for Joséphine died very suddenly, and all Europe agreed as to the name of the individual who compassed her death."

The most interesting evidence as well as the most conclusive and best authenticated with regard to the ex-empress's tragic end and its cause is furnished by the eminent Dr. Chevalier de Carro, which we now give.

"I am now going to state a fact," says the doctor in a MS. entitled "My Relations with Louis XVII.," which was very remarkable and very little known.

"During the Congress of Vienna, 1814, I saw a great deal of Sir James Wylie, a Scotch surgeon, who was in the Czar's confidence, and who had accompanied him to Paris, during the first invasion of the Allies which followed the Restoration.

"One day, Sir James told me, without making any comment of his own, that the Emperor had been a frequent visitor at Malmaison, when Joséphine was living there, after her divorce from Napoleon.

"Joséphine having been taken suddenly ill, the Czar despatched Sir James to attend upon her, in order to see her condition with his own eyes. He returned absolutely convinced that she was dying from the effects of poison, and that her end was imminent.

"She died, in fact, soon after Sir James left her."

Such evidence is irrefutable, seeing that both Sir James Wylie's skill and the Chevalier de Carro's veracity are unimpeachable.

In the *Souvenirs du Vicomte de Reiset* the following passage occurs (he is writing under date May 29th, 1814):

"We have heard this evening of the Empress Joséphine's

death, who succumbed at Malmaison before any one knew that she was even ill.

"In fact I was told yesterday that the Czar had gone to dine with her. This unexpected news has given rise to all manner of reports. Every one knows the great affection that existed between Joséphine and the Emperor Alexander, and the grave consequences that might have resulted from the great influence she exercised over him.

"Her premature death, which appears most unnatural, suggests many unpleasant ideas, and people don't hesitate to say that the Empress knew so much about what happened in past years, that she might have made a good deal of mischief. They even add that it was in her power to make certain revelations about a certain person in whom she was much interested in Barras' time, which would have been extremely inconvenient.

"Nevertheless all are unanimous in regretting the charming woman, whose whole life was spent in helping others.

"*May 30th.*—It seems that poor Joséphine had only been indisposed for a few days, and was carried off by a sudden attack which is vaguely described as a simple chill.

"The Czar's doctor, when he visited her, found her very ill. After much hesitation, he reluctantly diagnosed her ailment as angina. She suffered cruelly, no one being able to alleviate her agony. She was delirious at times.

"The Czar, who was greatly distressed by these alarming symptoms, which suggested a much graver cause than a mere chill, went to Malmaison himself, and remained there the whole evening.[1]

"By degrees Joséphine's appearance altered very painfully, and those around her felt convinced that her end was near.

"All Paris has been thrilled by the Empress's death. For years she has been known as the 'bonne Joséphine,' and

[1] See *Rapport fait au Sénat*, p. 132.

she was a benefactor to so many that the regret at her death is universal. So fascinating and so full of life and grace, she has been snatched from this world after only a few hours of suffering, and no one seems able to find a name for her terrible illness.

"In spite of all that has been done to allay public suspicion, *most people persist in declaring that Joséphine did not die from natural causes.*

"The authorities can do what they like, but these suspicions, whether founded or not, will hold their ground." [1]

Paul Lacroix gives perhaps the most detailed account of the Empress's last hours.

"On May 29th," he says in his *Histoire de Napoléon III.*, "the Empress suddenly felt ill, being seized with such giddiness that she could not stand up. Hortense was attacked by the same symptoms, whilst in her brother's case, they were even more acute and were accompanied by such high fever, that he was forced to keep his bed.

"On May 20th, the Czar dined at Malmaison.

"Queen Hortense was the only member of the family who could entertain him, Joséphine and her son being both in bed. The Doctors could not agree amongst themselves as to the cause of their illness or as to its nature; one physician pronounced it to be quinsy.

"Dr. Wylie, the Emperor's physician, held a widely different opinion. His imperial master having despatched him on the previous day to attend Joséphine, he had made a very different diagnosis, but being in a most delicate position, he kept his opinion to himself, not meaning to divulge it to any one but the Emperor.

"Throughout the dinner, the Czar could speak of nothing but Joséphine's condition, and when the guests tried to reassure him by quoting the doctors' opinion, he only shook his head sadly, saying, 'But are you sure that they are right?'

"Alexander evidently associated Dr. Wylie's diagnosis

[1] See *Souvenirs du Vicomte de Reiset*, 1810–14, vol. xxi. pp. 550–56.

with the communication respecting Louis XVII. which he had so recently received in that very house.

"On the night of May 28th–9th, Joséphine breathed her last."

The ratification of that fatal compact, which in facilitating Louis XVIII.'s accession to the Throne put France at the mercy of the Allies, was fixed for the next day, May 30th.

"The report spread throughout France," continues M. Lacroix, "that the Empress had been poisoned," whilst M. Laprade de Fontaine, reader to H.R.H. the Duchess d'Orléans, adds, "and all Europe was unanimous in naming the author of the tragedy."

To come nearer to our own time, the Empress Eugénie —according to Comte d'Herrisson—has been known to state that there is a tradition in the Bonaparte family, that Joséphine had helped in the evasion of Louis XVII., and that her unaccountably sudden death was due to her indiscretion in revealing all that she knew about it.

We cannot conclude this chapter without mentioning the most significant descent which was made upon Malmaison by order of the Provisional Government on the pretext of searching for some twenty-two millions of pictures (!), which Joséphine was accused of having unlawfully appropriated.

Considering that the cupboard, in which this imaginary theft was supposed to be concealed, measured two metres in height and less than one in width, the gross absurdity of putting forward such a hollow pretext for disguising their real object was quite too glaring. This little cupboard—practically a strong-box—was concealed in the wall behind the hangings of Joséphine's bed, and according to the Comte d'Herrisson, it contained some very valuable documents.

Amongst others, there were several autograph letters, which Napoleon had entrusted to Joséphine; but most important of all, there were the ex-Empress's own papers,

proving that Louis XVII. was still in existence and that therefore the so-called Louis XVIII. was nothing more than the Comte de Provence.

Every scrap of paper was carried away by M. Anglès, who at that time held the post of Minister of the Police.

CHAPTER VI

M. Provins' view respecting the children substituted for Louis XVII.—Admissions made by Claude Tardif—"The man with two masks"—Mlle. Tardif's statements to her schoolfellows—Remarkable letter from abroad—Second child substituted for Louis XVII.—Details of his family—Various documents contribute evidence concerning the fate of little Gonnehaut—Detailed information supplied by M. Gazotte respecting Madame Gonnehaut and her daughter—Extract from the *Légitimité Journal*—M. Osmond's views on the second child substituted for Louis XVII.—M. Leschot-Himely—"A sacred relic."

"I HAVE always thought and I still think," says M. Provins, speaking on the subject of the children who were substituted for Louis XVII., "that the first child who replaced the little king in the Tower was one of the sons of Jean Jacques Tardif, only that whereas I used to believe that the child in question was one of the youngest Tardifs, I now feel certain that he must have been the third son, who was born in 1778."

The description of the ricketty condition of this child given by an elder brother in a letter written in 1788 coincides most remarkably with the vignette furnished by Harmand in 1794 of the little prisoner, whom he found in the Temple.

This boy seems to have lived in great seclusion even from his relatives, and died at Neuilly in 1842.

On several occasions between 1820–28, a certain Claude Tardif admitted—but very cautiously—to several people, notably to the Comtesse de Brissenne and to Madame de Montaro, that he knew all about the origin of the child who was used as a substitute for the little king in the Tower, but that he meant to keep the secret to himself.

He even added—according to the testimony of one widow Pécourie, *nee* Aubry—who was dressmaker to the

Comtesse de Brissenne and worked in the house, that once when M. Tardif was in a confidential mood, he declared himself to have been the father of the child.

The Comtesse never confirmed this statement, but it is known that she warned her friend Madame de Montaro and also their mutual acquaintance, M. Dufossé-Desgenettes, that it was better not to speak of his family to M. Tardif, as he had sustained some sad losses, which had left some very painful memories.

These items of evidence are not to be refuted. Indeed, they are corroborated by a written declaration made by M. Dufossé-Desgenettes in the presence of the sculptor Foyatier and Dr. Jean Noyer and François Antoine Pascal.

There is much in M. Tardif's history which would lead one to believe that he was admirably suited to play a double part.

"This man with two masks," pursues M. Provins, "was in the habit of calling himself Tardif or Dugrange according as it might suit his circumstances. He began life in the king's service as one of the body-guards in De Villeroy's regiment, which was disbanded on June 12th, 1791.

"In 1792, he emigrated with the princes, and thus became a marked man in the eyes of the republicans and liable to the confiscation of all his possessions.

"Nevertheless we find him living very comfortably in Paris after Robespierre's fall. During the periods of the Directoire, the Consulate, and the Empire, we fail to trace his whereabouts.

"For twenty years Tardif effaced himself so successfully from public notice, that it is impossible to find any clue either to himself or his wife.

"When Louis XVIII. ascended the throne, however, he was suddenly resuscitated and was promoted to the rank of standard-bearer in Gramont's company. In the general distribution of honours which followed on the return from Ghent, Tardif was made a Baron and given the title of Chevalier de St. Louis.

"But why and for what services he was found to be entitled to receive these distinctions no one could ever guess.

"This same Baron Tardif passed the last years of his life as mysteriously as he had spent other periods of his existence. He lived in the rue St. Thomas de Louvre in a private house of his own, with a Government official belonging to the king's household as his companion or possibly his boarder. The latter, Jean Marie Langé, signed his death certificate along with one Marquis de Perthieu, who was closely attached to the Duc d'Angoulême.

"Ah! the Restoration had their sleuth-hounds everywhere!" concludes M. Provins.

Tardif's promotion to a peerage, his prosperous end, and above all the continual surveillance to which he was evidently subjected, all combine to make us believe that he was speaking the truth when he declared that he had played a prominent part with regard to providing Louis XVII.'s substitute in the Temple.

Furthermore, Mlle. Tardif, the sister of the deaf-mute, who was at school in Paris, repeatedly assured her schoolfellows that Louis XVII. had been replaced in the Tower by her invalid brother.

One of the readers of *La Légitimité* of March 25th, 1884, forwarded the following letter to M. Provins, which he had received from a priest abroad.

"My dear Friend—I read the article in the little journal —*la Légitimité*—which you sent me, with much interest, which was all the greater, because I have always been told that Louis XVII. did not die in the Temple.

"A propos of this, here is rather an odd story.

"In my College days I and my friend, the Abbé Freschard, received frequent visits from a very distinguished priest. He was older than us, but he had been born in the same Department (the Canton de Fresne). This priest was M. Abbé Tardif de Moindrey, brother of that Tardif who

preached a mission throughout France advocating a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[1]

"He often spoke to us of Louis XVII. and told us that he was in possession of irrefutable proofs that he did not die in the Temple.

"Some years after my arrival in Brazil, I was dining one day at Castello, at Father Laderrière's house with a doctor belonging to a French ship. This latter, in speaking of Louis XVII., told us that he had been his physician and had accompanied him to England and Holland. And in order to prove to us that Louis XVII. did not die in prison, he assured us that he had been replaced in the Temple by the invalid son of a certain M. Tardif.

"This statement afforded such a remarkable confirmation of the Abbé Tardif's assertion on the same point, that it struck me greatly. So that when I began to read your Journal, I was expecting to find the name of Tardif on every page.

"Signed C. Pronotaire Apostolique."[2]

As regards the second child that was substituted for Louis XVII., M. Otto Friedrichs has proved the facts of this interchange of children beyond all doubt. He says:

"The name of the second child was Gonnehaut.

"He was practically in a dying condition when he was taken from his mother, who was then living in the neighbourhood of the Temple — actually in the Quartier du Temple. Certain persons, who were in Madame Gonnehaut's confidence, affirmed that immediately after the death of the child in the Temple, both she and her daughter fled to

[1] The child who was substituted for Louis XVII. did not belong to the Moindrey branch of the Tardifs. At the time of the Revolution there were at least ten different branches of the Tardif family in France. It was Jean-Jacques Tardif, Seigneur of Petit-ville and D'Amage, who was the father, as we believe, of the little deaf-mute in the Temple. The original family is said to have come from Normandy. Some descendants were living in Sussex at the time of Cromwell (see *Le Dernier Roi Légitime de France*, vol. ii. p. 251).

[2] M. C—— is the almoner of a French Legation abroad. See note in *La Légitimite*, March 23rd, 1884.

Martinique. They remained abroad, having changed their name to Lenningen, which had been Madame Gonnehaut's maiden name.

"Under this name, they lived in the Convent of St. Joseph, where they were known to M. Cazotte, who was deputy Governor of the Windward Isles.

"After the fall of the Bourbons, April 1831, they returned to France and went to live in the Mother House of the Order in the Rue Mechain. There they both died.

"My information with regard to these women is absolutely correct and irrefutable.

"I have still one significant fact to add, with respect to the register of Madame Gonnehaut's Baptism in her native village of Retzinge—called now-a-days Rintzingen.

"The authorities, taking it for granted that she would leave no clue in the Windward Isles, by which she might be traced in later years, thought it well to destroy the register of her baptism in the Department of the Moselle.

"Consequently all the parochial registers for exactly the twelve months (during which, according to her daughter's evidence, her mother was born) are missing from the archives of the parish of Rintzingen.

"Here is another instance of the scrupulous care with which the powers that *were* sought to close every avenue which could possibly lead to the discovery of Louis XVII.'s survival from the Temple."

There is abundant evidence to hand to prove the accuracy of M. Friedrichs' statements.

"It is absolutely necessary," says M. Provins, "to quote some of the documents containing this evidence, because not only are they so interesting that they ought to be brought to the notice of the public, but because they give such a good idea of the different motives which led people to withhold what they did know with regard to the question of the evasion, knowledge which would have been of the greatest value in establishing Louis XVII.'s identity."

"This disgraceful cowardice," says the Vicomte de

Rochefoucauld, "is induced by a vague feeling of absolute terror."

And no wonder! The recollection of the cruel deaths which overtook so many of the actors in the gruesome drama still haunted the memory of their friends and children, who were not likely to forget the crimes which were committed and the ruthless persecutions which were organised by the successive rulers in France in order to suppress all chance of any revelations respecting the dark deeds done in the Temple.

So great was the intimidation that many who might have told much concerning Louis XVII. only mentioned his name in a whisper, and if in an unwary moment they did happen to let fall a word of their secret, they were instantly overtaken with the most poignant regrets. To return, however, to the evidence which is at our disposal.

To begin with the information supplied by M. Cazotte, who knew Madame Gonnehaut and her daughter abroad.

The former had worked in a vegetable garden at Versailles, and before her marriage her name was Leninger.

What could have led to her son being chosen as the second substitute for Louis XVII.?

It is clear from subsequent evidence that there was a certain likeness between this child of the people and the young king. But what was still more important to the persons wanting to make use of him, the poor boy was a victim to tubercular disease from which he had no hope of recovery.

So here were the very conditions that the Committee of Public Safety were so eagerly seeking.

And as the commands of that omnipotent body were final, the existence of such a child had no sooner been brought to their knowledge than steps were taken to effect his removal to the Tower.

Whether persuasion or force came into play is not certainly known; one point only is proved incontestably, namely, that soon after his arrival in the Temple the boy

died, and after a post-mortem had taken place it is almost certain that he was buried at the foot of the Tower.

It is equally certain that on the night of the tragedy the mother fled abroad. Whether she was *ordered* out of France by the various committees or whether her own sense of self-preservation prompted her flight, we cannot say.

After the Gonnehauts' arrival at St. Pierre in Martinique the daughter became music mistress in the Convent of St. Joseph, under the name of Mlle. Leninger.

Now as Martinique was Joséphine's native place, it is more than likely that Madame de Beauharnais may have aided and abetted the Gonnehauts' departure to that distant spot.

Here is an extract from the *Légitimité Journal* of March 1884, which is distinctly interesting.

"One of our friends, being anxious to secure information from headquarters, made interest with a certain Madame Auvynet—a granddaughter of the great Charette—to approach the late M. Cazotte's three daughters, who were all living together in Paris.

"This is Madame Auvynet's letter on the subject.

'Sir, I will tell you briefly about the old ladies, who I mentioned to you the other day. Two of the three sisters who are living together actually saw Naundorf, and admit that he had something very distinguished about him. Madame de Rambaud, whom they knew, and at whose house they saw the Prince, had warned them that having been so little in France, he spoke French with an accent.

'And indeed, he said to one of the ladies' husbands.

"Fous havey la une chandille beditte femme." (Vous avez la une gentille petite femme.)

'I observed that the recollection of this compliment was cherished by the old lady as a pleasant reminder that she had really seen the Duc de Normandie.

'Unhappily, however, she won't recognise his children, declaring that the time has gone by for that.

'"If there were to be a split in the present Monarchical

party," she says, "it would expose France to the danger of remaining a permanent Republic."

'But as I resolutely kept her to the question of Louis XVII.'s evasion from the Temple, I did at last wring the following details out of her.

'"I once knew a woman, who had a dear little boy, just the same age as the dauphin. He had fair curly hair and was so like the young prince that in the quarters where he lived (Quartier St. Antoine, I think) he was nick-named the little dauphin. This child developed an incurable tubercular disease.

'"One day a very smartly dressed lady, but as simple in her manner as a sister of charity, came to see the boy's mother and examined the child very carefully. In the course of her visit she drew out a small miniature, which she appeared to be comparing with the little invalid.

'"Presently she observed to the mother, that as she had to be out at work all day, the child could not possibly have all the attention that he required, and proceeded to offer to place him in a hospital.

'"(I suggested was it the Maison Dieu? but I dared not insist on an answer for fear of breaking the thread of the old lady's story.)

'"Finally by dint of persuasion the poor woman consented to give up her child, who was placed in a hospital, where she often went to see him.

'"One day when she went as usual to pay him a visit, she was told she could not see him.

'"'From that day to this,' said the unhappy mother, 'I never set eyes on my boy again. But directly I heard the report of the dauphin's death, I said to all my neighbours—It is not the dauphin who is dead in the Temple, but my own child!'"

'This is nearly word for word what the old lady told me and I consider it a very valuable piece of evidence. Signed, P. Auvynet.'"

It is interesting to learn that Madame Auvynet did her

utmost to persuade these ladies to write down all they remembered on the subject of Madame Gonnehaut, but as the following letter shows, they were evidently afraid of committing themselves in any way.

"SIR" (writes Madame Auvynet), "I hasten to inform you that my attempt yesterday was not at all successful, in fact I feel rather annoyed with myself for having told you that long story and for having mentioned different names. The lady who told it to me does not wish to be identified with it, and says her sisters reproached her for having given so many details. In fact, they try to say now that the woman was a little crazy, at any rate that her daughter said so. This daughter was in America afterwards, and saw M. Cazotte there. As to their father having recognised the prince, one of the ladies said, 'My father had a very vivid imagination and was easily excited,' whilst another added, 'He was very intimate with Madame de Rambaud, and often went to see the prince at her house. He was too polite to appear incredulous, but he was never really convinced that Naundorf was Louis XVII.'

"As to the name of the mother of the second substitute, they would not give it to me.

"Madame des R—— told me that her sisters were very timid, and were determined not to compromise themselves in any way. I therefore tried a last expedient. I explained to them that the reason why we wanted the name of the woman was in order to find the certificate of her son's death. Or rather in order to prove that such a certificate is not in existence, seeing that the child died under the name of Louis Capet.

"And I appealed to the lady's conscience, by pointing out to her that she would be rendering a great service without running any personal risk.

"Madame des R—— said she would ask her sisters to tell me the name, but she held out very little hope that they would.

"I must confess that their foolish reasons for not wishing to recognise Naundorf drove me wild.

"'Why, if Naundorf is to be acknowledged as Louis XVII.,' they objected, 'it will make Louis XVIII. and Charles X. usurpers, and altogether the monarchy will get so muddled up that in the end we shall have to fetch back the Bonapartes.'

"Finally, she declared that she had her own theories, and believed in fate.

"'No doubt,' she said, 'as the Naundorfs are so unfortunate, that they do belong to the unhappy Louis XVII., but they must submit to their fate.'

"'But, madame,' I broke in, 'if you were one of them, would you not want to escape from your fate?'

"Evidently that side of the question had never occurred to her. Certainly the narrowness of some people's minds is appalling!

"I did succeed in making them look at the photographs. They recognised the Duc de Normandie, and were struck by the likeness between Prince Adelbert and Princesse Marie Therèse and the Bourbons. But either from self-interest or from timidity, they would go no further.

"(Signed) P. AUVYNET."

A Vendéenne, however, was not to be baffled, and on March 29th, 1884, she writes again.

"SIR,—Just as I had given up all hope, heaven befriended me. Here is a letter from Madame des R——.

"*Sunday, March 23rd*, 1884.

"DEAR MADAME,—The name that you want is Leninger. The daughter of Madame Leninger was music-mistress in the Convent of St. Joseph at St. Pierre Martinique in 1830. But let me repeat that we wish to keep ourselves entirely distinct from this affair. Whatever may be stated in the papers at your disposal, my father never saw Naundorf, and we do emphatically object to his name appearing in the evidence."

(This is not true, because it was on the strength of the half revelation made by C. Cazotte at Madame de Rambaud's house that my friend first thought of consulting his daughter.)

Surely from this evidence it is clear that the child who died in the Temple was little Leninger, and therefore obviously *not* Louis XVII.

"We have no right," says M. Provins, "to reveal this lady's name, but surely we may publish a letter from Madame de Rambaud, which was written at a time when Madame des R—— was younger and clearly more courageous."

"*Sunday, September 11th,* 1836.

"DEAR PRINCE,—Just one word more to say that M. and Madame des Roseaux are the bearers of my letter, which I am sure will increase your satisfaction in receiving it. They are coming to London on a party of pure pleasure. They mean to remain in London about three weeks, and will stay with friends. I am so glad that they will be able to tell me all about you on their return, for I have had no news of you for two months.

"Adieu, dear prince. Love those who love you, and remember the faithful *who are not yet amongst the departed!*

"VEUVE RAMBAUD."

At that time of day, Madame des Roseaux was evidently not among the *departed,* although the hour was to come when the timidity of advancing age would drive her out of the ranks of the militant Naundorfists.

Before closing this chapter, we think well to quote a theory which is put forward by M. Osmond in the article which he contributes to *La Question Louis XVII.* on the question of the substitutions.

Not only does he support his theory with very substantial facts, but it puts such an entirely new complexion upon the matter that it is intensely interesting.

"Now as regards the child who acted as the second substitute for Louis XVII.," says M. Osmond, "who was he, and what was his mental condition?

"We all know that he was the son of a vegetable gardener at Versailles who had been in the employment of Louis XVI. We know also that the boy's name was Leninger.

"According to our friend, M. Otto Friedrichs, who has investigated this point most carefully, the child's widowed mother dropped her husband's name in order to mislead the enemy, and called herself by her maiden name of Leninger.

"So much as regards our first question.

"Now as to the mental condition of the second substitute.

"All the writers who up to the present time have dealt with this subject, have been agreed in maintaining that Leninger was neither a voluntary nor even a conscious substitute for Louis XVII., so far as he personally was concerned.

"Some writers even declare that he was removed to the Tower of the Temple without the consent or even knowledge of his mother.

"Now although I am well aware that I stand alone in advancing my own opinion on this question, I venture nevertheless to differ from all my learned colleagues on this particular point, namely, little Leninger's own participation in the plot.

"And I begin by asking if it is reasonable to suppose that he could have made such a signal success of the part he was called upon to play, if he had been kept in complete ignorance of the rôle that was imposed upon him?

"Granted that the boy was naturally an extraordinarily silent child—although this suggestion must rest entirely on hypothesis—yet even if this were actually the case, does not our own sense tell us that during the four months which he spent in the Tower, he must infallibly have betrayed his identity now and again either by some allusion to his own people—who certainly did not belong to the royal family—or by referring to his mother's occupation, or,

most probable alternative of any, he would surely have inquired why he was addressed as 'Charles' or spoken of as 'little Capet,' and would thereby have revealed his own identity.

"It had been in order to prevent the occurrence of such a serious contretemps, which must necessarily have wrecked the intrigue, that in the first place the conspirators had secured a deaf-mute as first substitute for the little king.

"But after a time the very fact of the child's too obvious infirmity proved a danger in itself.

"It was all very well to try and impose upon people with the fiction that ever since the infamous Hébert incident, the prisoner had displayed a rigorous determination not to utter a single sound.

"But even to the most casual observer, the boy Tardif must have appeared such an unmistakable deaf-mute, it must have been so evident to all who were brought into contact with him, that his silence proceeded from a real and physical inability to speak, that he was speechless not because he would not but because he could not articulate, that his guardians soon realised the impossibility as well as the unwisdom of prolonging that form of farce any longer.

"Hence it was absolutely imperative to supply the place with another child, who, although in full possession of the faculty of speech, could yet be relied on to keep a discreet silence, and, in short, could be trusted not to give away the situation.

"Now," continues M. Osmond, "though it may seem improbable and even impossible that any such willing martyr could have been found in the young king's cause, I venture to assert that such a voluntary substitute was actually forthcoming in the person of the twelve-year-old son of the humble vegetable-woman of Versailles.

"Rarely as such heroism is to be found in so young a boy, examples of similar devotion and self-sacrifice do gleam forth from many a page of martyrology and from even secular history, and in connection with little Leninger it

must be remembered that at that time of day, a wild enthusiasm was by no means uncommon amongst the youths of Royalist houses to serve the boy-king.

"It is, moreover, an undisputed fact that Madame Leninger adored her royal employers and inspired her son to do the same.

"It is also well known that when on one occasion the little Dauphin gave a bunch of flowers to the widow Leninger, they were laid up as the most precious of all her earthly possessions and regarded as sacred relics to the end of her life.

"Without trespassing too much on mere conjecture, it is therefore only reasonable to take it for granted that such a mother may well have encouraged her son to sacrifice the last weeks of an already doomed existence to the service of the young king, and it is equally conceivable that the moribund boy may have felt a proud joy in so doing.

"Not only, do I repeat, is this a quite logical conclusion, but I venture to affirm from certain data at my disposal that such was the case.

"In support of this, I shall presently adduce some formal evidence which has never been published till within comparatively recent years.

"Before going any further, however, I must mention in connection with this subject, one M. Leschot-Himely, a well-known watchmaker and a native of Geneva. Up to the time of the Revolution, he had carried on business in Paris, but after the beginning of the political disturbances he returned to Switzerland.

"Being extremely ingenious in the invention of automatic toys, M. Leschot-Himely was repeatedly summoned to the royal palace to display his wonderful achievements before the Queen and the royal children. Consequently, he was very well acquainted with the little Dauphin.

"During the troublous times of the Revolution he was most helpful, under the assumed name of Lebas, in befriending the refugees, who fled to Switzerland.

"Thus on one occasion it fell to his lot to entertain an old man and a young boy who had taken flight over the border. In the boy, M. Lebas instantly recognised Louis XVII., though he was careful not to betray his discovery to his guests.

"After having shown them all the hospitality in his power, Lebas assisted them to embark on one of the boats on the lake on their way to Italy.

"Several years later, one of his sons, Frederic by name, became the devoted friend and companion of Louis XVII. for a short but eventful period during the vicissitudes which immediately preceded the latter's arrival in Berlin and his simultaneous assumption of the name of Naundorf.[1]

"That some understanding did exist between Louis XVII. and the old Swiss watchmaker is quite clear from the following circumstance.

"In 1824, Naundorf, having been falsely accused of base-coining at Brandenburg, was put on a mock trial and most unjustly condemned to three years' imprisonment in that city.

"On that occasion the ill-used man revealed his identity to the magistrates, claiming to be the Duc de Normandie.

"Rumours of this revelation having reached Charles X. he became seriously uneasy, and suddenly bethought himself of communicating with M. Lebas of Geneva with respect to Naundorf's real identity.

"His reason for this proceeding was not far to seek, because some years previously, when Louis XVII. had appealed directly to his family to recognise his claims, he had urged his royal uncle to verify certain of his statements by referring them to M. Lebas, whom he declared could easily be found by Charlotte Robespierre, the sister of the notorious revolutionary leader.

"This woman—who, strange to say, was at that time in the receipt of a pension from the Duchesse d'Angoulême—

[1] Of Frederic's association with Louis XVII. we shall have occasion to speak at considerable length in Book III. of this work.

was then living at Geneva and on intimate terms with the Leschot-Himely family, as well as with the Leningers.

"Having made this discursion in order to introduce M. Himely to our readers, I will now proceed," says M. Osmond, "to give the evidence which is supplied by the old watchmaker's venerable grand-daughter, who was likewise the niece of Frederic, Louis XVII.'s faithful comrade in distress.

"This evidence was never published until the comparatively recent date of September 1892, when it was contributed by the aged writer to the *Gazette de Lausanne*."[1]

"'I remember,' she says, 'that one day during the winter of 1842, when I was on a visit to my grandmother, Madame Leschot-Himely, that I found her sitting before the fire, with her bureau open in front of her. She was busy taking letters out of the drawers, which after first carefully reading, she threw on the fire.

"'For a considerable time I watched her without daring to interrupt her, till at length my attention was attracted by one particular letter.

"'This contained a portrait, to which a curl of bright golden hair was attached by a silk thread.

"'When, however, I stretched out my hand to stroke the curl, my grandmother promptly checked me.

"'"No, no, my child,"' she cried, '"you mustn't touch it, for this hair is a sacred relic of a dear martyr."

"'Since then,' adds the aged writer, 'I have had good reason for believing that that little curl belonged to the boy Leninger who died in the Tower, and that the hair was sent to my grandfather in order to show him that it was quite a different colour from that of the Dauphin's. . . . Moreover, so far as I can trust my memory, I am under the impression that the child who died in the Temple had been the voluntary substitute for the young king; indeed I feel justified in saying that some sort of a promise had been made to the Queen to the effect that if ever the necessity should arise, little Leninger

[1] See *Gazette de Lausanne*, September 7th, 1892.

would be proud to serve his king by representing him or rather impersonating him.[1]

"'Quite naturally, however, the boy's family had deferred parting from him until the sick child's fatal disease had actually reached its final stage.'"

With this evidence before us, it is not difficult to accept the theory that Leninger *was* a willing and sentient actor in the part assigned to him in the tragi-comedy of the Temple, a part which he fulfilled most admirably.

In connection with this part of our subject, it is curious to note that M. Jeanroy, one of the surgeons employed in making the autopsy of the dead child in the Temple, dilates upon the unusual development of his brain, which he declares was so remarkable in a child of that age that "had Louis XVII. lived to maturity he would have undoubtedly proved to be a man of an extraordinarily grand character."

After entering at considerable length into all the particulars of the post-mortem and the doctors' subsequent report, M. Osmond gives the following extract from M. de Beauchesne's work.

This passage is distinctly interesting because (in a sense wholly unintentional on the part of the author) it supplies a very suggestive fact.

"The post-mortem being ended," says M. de Beauchesne, "the professional men withdrew from the Temple.

"It was now five o'clock in the evening, and the news of the young king's death, which had been officially announced at the Convention, had already been widely circulated throughout Paris. Knots of people were gathered about the gates of the Temple and congregated round the doorsteps of the neighbouring houses.

"A few cries of exultant satisfaction were to be heard from these groups, but they were distinctly in the minority; for the most part the crowds spoke in subdued tones of the

[1] It must be remembered that as quite a child Leninger had been nicknamed the "Little Dauphin" by his playfellows, owing to his extraordinary likeness to the Prince.

little Dauphin's fascinating face and gracious manner, and were obviously affected by compassionate sorrow for his untimely end.

"Amongst the others, one poor woman attracted considerable attention by her wild, unrestrained grief.

"Pale as death, with all her hair flying loosely about her face, and grasping some dead flowers in her hand, the unhappy creature rushed through the streets like one demented with grief. Followed by a pack of children, who supposed her to be drunken, she hastened by way of the Rue Phélippeaux to one of the entrances to the Temple. Here, however, her further progress was arrested by the sentry. In spite of her urgent entreaties, he positively refused to allow her to proceed any farther.

"Her passionate cries and sobs, however, brought the porter Darques and another official to the spot, who demanded to know her business.

"'I want to see the dear child—I must see him,' she cried; 'he once took me into his little garden at the Tuileries.'

"And when Darques explained to her that no one was admitted to the death chamber, the poor woman would not be silenced.

"'Surely no one can be forbidden to look on the face of the dead,' she sobbed out; 'and I must lay these faded flowers, the flowers he once gave me, inside his coffin.'

"It was only with the greatest difficulty that some compassionate bystanders finally succeeded in drawing the poor thing away from the Temple."

So much for M. de Beauharnais' side of the story.

But, as we shall presently see, this incident admits of another interpretation.

"When," continues M. Osmond, "Madame Leninger heard of the death of the child in the Temple, her natural mother-love set all other considerations at defiance, and seized with a frenzied longing to look on her boy's face, she forthwith fled to the Temple, clamouring for admittance.

"But after having given way to the perilous outburst of

passionate distress, Madame Leninger fully realised how far she had thereby endangered both her own and her daughter's life. Feeling, therefore, that her only hope of safety lay in instant flight from the country, she left Paris that very night, without waiting till her son's burial had taken place.

"Martinique, Joséphine de Beauharnais' native island, which was her destination, was sufficiently remote to afford a safe shelter for the fugitives, and there, as we know, the mother and daughter remained for many years.

"And so whilst under cover of the oncoming twilight these unhappy women fled from Paris, in all haste and secrecy, the deepening shadows of that summer night descended on the walls of the grim Temple, veiling them for a brief space in a discreet darkness.

"Meanwhile, on the second floor of that ancient building lay the dead body of the little hero, whose death was to be the cause of such unending controversy in the years to come, whilst on the storey immediately above, the young princess lingered in her lonely prison, thinking doubtless of the brother, who probably by that time she had good reason to believe was far away from the Temple, although in reality the little king was still under the same roof as herself.

"Hidden away in a dark, inaccessible corner of the uppermost floor of the Tower lay Louis XVII., sickly in health, cramped and cabined in body, but full of hope and happiness to-night, for had not a trusted voice whispered in his ear—

"'It will be to-morrow, to-morrow will be the day!'"

("C'est pour demain!")

CHAPTER VII

A grim death-roll—The various deaths and disappearances connected with Louis XVII.'s evasion and false death-certificate and burial—Sundry disappearances of certain individuals.

BEFORE going on to deal with the contents of Book III., we cannot refrain from pausing a moment to enumerate in bare outline the various deaths and mysterious disappearances of certain individuals, all of whom were more or less directly connected with Louis XVII. and his vicissitudes.

For we feel it would be a serious omission on our part if we failed to emphasise the length of this ghastly roll-call, because the hapless victims *being* dead—or rather, we should say, *murdered*—do most eloquently speak in support of the cause to which they were certainly martyrs in deed if not in will.

We will begin our necrology with the trio of doctors, whose sensationally sudden deaths were so immediately connected with the tragi-comedy in the Temple that they have a fair right to stand first on the list of those whose loss of life or liberty was obviously due to their association with the "Child in the Temple."

Is it not appalling to reflect that within the first eleven days of June 1795, Dr. Désault, Dr. Choppart, and Dr. Doublet all died so suddenly and so mysteriously that no one hesitated for a moment to ascribe their deaths to poison?

And indeed in each case, as we know, there were substantial proofs to justify the suspicion.

On the 8th of June, their poor little patient, the mock Louis XVII., also died from the effects of slow poison—or at any rate his death was clearly accelerated by the ad-

ministration of slow poison—whilst within a fortnight of his supposed funeral all the four bearers of the coffin, the employés of Voisin, the undertaker-in-chief, departed this life with such extraordinary suddenness and so simultaneously that there was no possibility of doubting that they too had an assisted passage out of the world.

That Sénart, the author of the *Great Book of Great Crimes*, should have been translated to another sphere by slow but sure means was the least one could have expected, seeing that his book was known to contain particulars respecting the little prisoner in the Tower, his post-mortem and his subsequent burial.

Then we come to General Hoche, General de Frotté, Pichegru, and the ex-Empress Joséphine, whose respective fates are still fresh in our memory.

Of the treacherous murder of poor old M. B—— and the young girl Marie we have still to hear, as also of the blood-curdling tragedy of the Petit de Perivale family, when six innocent persons were slaughtered in one night.

Next on our list stands the noble-hearted Pezold, whose cruel death was unquestionably due to poison, as the poor victim himself declared, and which was followed within a few days by his successor Laurestin's sudden end.

The assassination of the Duc de Berri comes next on our grim list, whilst that of Thomas Martin, the peasant seer, closes it. It includes twenty-seven names!

So much for certain deaths; but who can number the many disappearances, many of which never found their way into history, whilst others were hardly known at the time of their occurrence.

We will only mention a few instances here.

Amongst the "evanished" stands first Caron, the "faithful kitchen knave" of the Temple; then Mathieu, whom Laurent calls a "vile wretch," so perhaps he only met his deserts; Frédéric, the kindly comrade who befriended Louis XVII. in his escape from the hospital after he had fallen into Napoleon's hands, and who passed so dramatically out of

history on the Westphalian border ; Marassin, the young French officer, who after his interview with the Duchesse d'Angoulême was thrown into prison and never heard of again ; and finally Théodor Clairnel, whose tragic story we will not forestall.

BOOK III

THE MARTYRDOM OF A KING

"A man I am, cross'd with adversity."

—*The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

CHAPTER I

Naundorf's arrival in Berlin—His passport—Sets up as a clockmaker—Weiler's recollections of Naundorf—Where had Louis XVII. spent the last fifteen years?—Naundorf's own story—His removal from the second floor of the Tower—His concealment in the Tower garret—His removal in a coffin from the Temple—Amongst friends—His illness—His arrest and re-imprisonment.

On a late autumn day in the year 1810, a post-chaise drew up at the "Black Eagle Hotel," a third-rate inn in the city of Berlin, from which a traveller alighted.

With him he bore a passport, which described him as one Charles Guillaume Naundorf, aged forty-three years.

It needed no expert to discover that the appearance of the bearer corresponded in no way with the description furnished by the passport.

And small wonder! For whereas he was represented as being middle-aged, Charles-Louis, Duc de Normandie, the holder of the passport, was barely twenty-five!

The "mine hosts" of those days, however, were not more scrupulous than the generality of our modern hotel-keepers in the matter of obliging apparently well-to-do strangers especially if they spoke the language of the country fluently.

And Naundorf did speak German remarkably well.[1]

Neither did the police concern themselves much about the new arrival, at any rate not at first.

He had originally hoped in seeking Berlin to enter the Prussian army, but insurmountable obstacles having arisen

[1] Marie Antoinette was most careful to teach her own language to the Dauphin. Moreover, after his evasion from the Temple he was placed in the care of a German woman, so that he had every facility for perfecting himself in German, which he constantly spoke throughout his life, and which stood him in good stead when he came to Germany.

to render this step impossible, Naundorf, being practically penniless, realised the necessity of instantly setting about the earning of his own living.

Fortunately for the son of Louis XVI., he had inherited his father's love of and genius for mechanism, so that when during his wanderings an opportunity had occurred for him to learn the art of watchmaking, he had gladly availed himself of it and had acquired considerable skill in the perfecting of watches and clocks. Hence Naundorf's decision to establish himself as a clockmaker in Berlin.

At No. 52 in the Schützenstrasse he rented two little rooms, and soon entered into business relations with two fellow-craftsmen, Pretz and Weiler by name.

Thanks to them, he secured several customers.

It was Weiler who, when pressed in 1824 to give some particulars about Naundorf, answering a question respecting the latter's identity, said, "That is my own secret; I will only say that he is a man who has known a great deal of trouble, and who may yet make a sensation in the world, for much interest attaches to his birth."

Later, in 1836, when cross-examined by Xavier Laprade (he went to Prussia in order to collect evidence in favour of Louis XVII.), Weiler stated, "I always remember one occasion—it must have been in either 1811 or 1812—when Naundorf happening to be in our workshop, he suddenly asked—

"'Would it surprise you to be told that I was born a prince?'

"By way of answer, we burst out laughing, whereupon Naundorf walked away and never entered our workshop again."

And so, having settled himself in his humble lodgings, Louis XVII. was able for a brief space to enjoy the three blessings for which his storm-tossed being yearned—a sufficiency of daily bread, freedom from persecution, and above all—obscurity!

The date of his arrival in Berlin marked Naundorf's

MONSIEUR XAVIER DE LAPRADE

début into history. Till that moment it held no record of such an individual.

Let us leave him for the present in his temporary city of refuge and concern ourselves with the point which has been raised so persistently by writers and readers alike, namely, "Granted that Louis XVII. did escape from the Temple, what became of him during the interval that elapsed between the date of his evasion in the summer of 1795 and that of his arrival in Berlin as C. G. Naundorf in the autumn of 1810?" We shall try to answer this burning question as exhaustively as possible.

At starting, however, we would point out how impossible it is to present a continuous and unbroken record of Louis XVII.'s vicissitudes during these sixteen years, because, to borrow M. Provins' expression, his wanderings were perforce *anonymous;* secrecy was, so to speak, his travelling cloak, mystery and mystification the inseparable companions of his daily life.

Many writers have cavilled at the fragmentary and sometimes imperfect—but very rarely inaccurate—character of Naundorf's story as told by himself, but surely, so far from detracting from its value, those very features should confirm its authenticity.

What average adult, looking back, say over sixteen years, would be capable of furnishing an unbroken succinct account of every month, let alone every day, that he had spent between the ages of nine and twelve?

Moreover, if Naundorf had been a born autobiographer and gifted with the most extraordinary memory, how could he have possibly kept a detailed journal of all his wanderings, seeing that he was literally hunted from pillar to post? He was kept perpetually on the move, travelling sometimes by day, but more often by night, sometimes on foot through out-of-the-way lanes, sometimes on wheels over equally obscure roads. He was always disguised, always bore a false name, and, most important detail of all, we know that he was frequently misinformed of set purpose as to the

names of the kind folk who assisted him and the friendly roofs that sheltered him.

For naturally the commonest prudence dictated the closest secrecy with respect to every one and every place connected in any way with Louis XVII.

And that in later life Naundorf *never* attempted to fill in the gap of his own story with any problematical facts or names, affords surely only additional proof of the genuineness of the information which he did supply.

So now let us put the clock back some sixteen years and take up the thread of Louis XVII.'s story at the very moment when his removal from the second floor of the Tower was imminent, or rather let Naundorf speak for himself.

"At this time," he says, referring to the period of Laurent's gaolership, "my friends were plotting to rescue me from my executioners' hands. But the obstacles to my removal appeared insuperable.

"As the single approach to my prison from below was strictly guarded day and night, my only hope of escape was to be removed to the topmost floor of the Tower, which was unoccupied.

"It was a very bold scheme, but none other seemed possible. It was the only way in which my disappearance out of my prison could be achieved. And as there was no sentry posted on the stairs immediately outside my door, it was easy enough to convey me *upstairs* without attracting attention. For though my sister occupied the third storey, there was no guard outside her door at that time. Every circumstance therefore seemed favourable to my transfer to the garrets immediately under the roof of the Tower.

"One day my protectors made me swallow a strong dose of opium, which I supposed to be medicine, and very soon afterwards, I fell into a state of drowsy torpor, just like a kind of waking-sleep.

"Whilst in that condition, I remember seeing how a child was placed in my bed, though it seemed to me in my half-

waking dream that it was really only a lay-figure with a mask which looked something like my own face.

"This bit of jugglery was accomplished at the moment when the guard was changed, so that when the newly arrived municipal came upstairs to certify my presence in the tower, he contented himself with a glance at what he concluded was my sleeping figure in the bed, and went his way.

"By that time, however, I was sleeping heavily, and only awoke to find myself in a big garret, where I had never been before, in the fourth storey of the Tower. It was crammed with all sorts of lumber, among which they had arranged my little hiding-hole, having put some food for me in a small cupboard which was inside one of the turrets."

(On this point Naundorf was mistaken; there was no connection between the garrets and the turrets, but no doubt the round shape of the cupboard misled the child.)

"Every other exit from the room was blocked by old furniture, &c. Before taking me out of my prison, my friend —whose name I shall give later on—had explained to me that my only chance of being saved was to endure every discomfort and hardship uncomplainingly, adding that the slightest false move on my part would involve both my own and my friend's ruin.

"He insisted, moreover, that whilst I was in hiding, I should never seek any one's help, but should behave exactly as if I were dumb. On awaking, I remembered all these instructions, and so resolved to die sooner than disobey them.

"I ate and slept again, and patiently awaited my friend's coming. From time to time I saw my deliverer, but he always came at night, when he brought me all that I needed.

"The lay-figure was discovered the very first night,[1] but the Convention thought well to keep the secret of my evasion, which it believed had been fully achieved.

"On their side, my friends, in order to dupe the blood-

[1] This agrees with the suggestion put forward in Book I. chap. x.

thirsty republicans, had started off a child in the direction of Strasbourg, under my name.

"Meanwhile the authorities, with a view to masking the real state of affairs, had replaced the lay-figure by a genuinely dumb boy and had doubled the sentries, so as to hoodwink the public more effectually. This increase of the sentries prevented my friends from carrying out their scheme any further, and obliged me to remain indefinitely in my uncomfortable quarters, where I felt buried alive.

"At that time I was nine and a half years old, and being well used to hardships, I made light of the cold which I had to endure, for it was during the winter months that I was stowed away in the garret. I was so completely concealed, that no one coming into the loft would have detected me, and my friend had to grope his way to my hiding-place on all fours. Sometimes for days together no one came to see me, for devoted as my friends were, they were not always able to surmount certain obstacles. . . .

"A great deal happened during my stay in the garret, which I can't mention here, for reasons which I keep to myself. I can only repeat what was told me by my friend Montmorin, who was faithful to me till death, and who was very well known to Madame d'Angoulême under far different circumstances.

"Having replaced the lay-figure by a deaf-mute, the authorities gave the strictest orders that no one who had ever seen me, the real Dauphin, should be admitted to see the prisoner.

"Consequently, in order to certify the presence of the pseudo-prisoner they were careful to employ all those municipals who had never set eyes on me.

"In spite of all their precautions, however, the fact of my evasion leaked out.

"It was whispered abroad that the Dauphin had left the Temple. This so alarmed the conspirators that they resolved to compass the death of the dumb boy. To this end they mixed the most unwholesome ingredients with his

food, so as to make him ill, without incurring the odium of having directly murdered him.

"Dr. D—— was called in, not for the purpose of curing him, but simply to keep up appearances.

"He soon discovered the truth, however, and forthwith prescribed the necessary remedies, employing his friend and colleague Choppart to compound them.

"To the latter he confided that the little patient was *not* the son of Louis XVI., whom he had formerly attended.

"This confidential communication having been spread abroad, my parents' murderers grew still more alarmed, and realising that in spite of all their machinations the deaf-mute was holding his own against their covert attacks on his life, they substituted another child for him. The latter, who was selected from a hospital in Paris, was practically in a moribund condition.

"In the meanwhile, to stop further mischief, the authorities poisoned Drs. Désault and Choppart.

"The second child was attended by doctors, who having seen neither me nor my dumb substitute, naturally believed that they were treating the Dauphin."

(Here again is an inaccuracy, because we know that Désault did attend the moribund child, but Naundorf had been either misinformed on this point or was confused in his recollections.)

"And now I want to relate an incident which occurred when I was imprisoned with my father and Clery."

Here follows the story of the loyal mason, Joseph Paulin, who brought the gold coins.[1]

"The name of this man," goes on the Dauphin, "was Joseph Paulin, who was employed later on to convey the deaf-mute from the Tower to Madame Joséphine de Beauharnais, afterwards the Empress of the French. On seeing the child, she exclaimed, 'Oh! you wretched man! do you know what you have done? You've delivered Louis XVII. into the hands of his enemies!'

[1] See Book I. chap. i.

"Joséphine was well acquainted both with me and the dumb boy, for it was she who had secured the latter for Barras, when a live substitute was wanted for the lay-figure. So for all she knew to the contrary the deaf-mute had been rescued from the Tower, whilst I had been left behind to perish.

"It seems strange that the very person who had supplied so much of the money to defray the expenses of my evasion should have been deceived on this point, but it proves that the exchange of the moribund child for the dumb one was not the work of my *friends*, but of Barras' creatures. Hence Madame de Beauharnais' despair, who for some time did believe that my destruction was a *fait accompli*, and that Barras for some private reasons had played a trick upon her.

"Urgent State reasons compelled the authorities to hasten their poor victim's death.

"He died, I am told, on June 8th, 1795, and after a post-mortem the body was put into a coffin for burial.

"This coffin was placed in the room that I used to share with my father. During this transaction I was again heavily drugged, and then brought down from the garret and placed in the coffin, from which the dead child's body had been removed.

"This manœuvre was safely accomplished before the time came which had been fixed for the funeral to set out to the cemetery.

"The corpse had hardly been stowed away in my late hiding-place in the loft, before my friends—who knew all that was happening—arrived at the Temple and promptly deposited the coffin in which I was concealed inside the carriage.

"All the onlookers naturally took it for granted that the body represented myself, about to be buried. That carriage had been specially adapted to the occasion.

"On the road to the cemetery I was hastily taken out of the coffin, and hidden away in the deep well of the

carriage, whilst the coffin was quickly stuffed with old papers, in order to give it the proper weight.

"Directly it had been thrust into a grave, my friends returned with me to Paris. I was then handed over to the keeping of other friends, but being still under the influence of the opium, I have no recollection of any part of this transaction.

"When I did awaken I found myself in a very clean room and in bed, with Madame —— watching beside me.

"She was the kind woman who long before had played the part of the young sentry in the Temple grounds."

(Here Naundorf refers to an incident which he relates at an earlier stage in his memoirs, and which is corroborated by Clery's journal. It was connected with the time that he was still under his mother's care. "One day," he says, "when we went down to walk in the garden, we noticed a young sentry, who had been posted at the end of a green path, to prevent us from going beyond it. He made signs to us to show that he was friendly to us: the sentry looked very young, not more than eighteen. (It was really a woman in disguise, aged twenty-eight. She was the widow of one of the faithful Swiss guards who had been massacred on the fatal night of August 10th). When later on I have occasion to mention this devoted friend by name, my sister will remember her.)

"It was indeed a mercy that the whole affair of my evasion had been so promptly executed. For I had scarcely been put into safe keeping before the plot was discovered. Happily I was too well hidden to be recaptured. But as it was openly said that it was not the Dauphin who had been buried, the authorities ordered their agents to exhume the coffin, to nail it down more securely, and to bury it elsewhere, so as to frustrate any search that might be made for it. My friends meanwhile being apprehensive for my safety, disguised me as best they could and sent me out of Paris in a carriage.

"At the same time, in order to mislead my pursuers, they

arranged that another child—a native of Versailles—and bearing my name, should also leave Paris with his parents, so as to produce the impression that I had already taken flight over the border.

"My destination on leaving Paris was the Vendéenne Army. I was tenderly cared for on the journey by various faithful servants. But all their loving care could not save me from a serious illness, the natural result of the many trying vicissitudes that I had undergone during the past months. I was therefore left alone with Madame ——, who nursed me with the greatest love and devotion.

"When I began to recover she taught me German, in order that I might pass as her son, she being Swiss by birth.

"During the whole time that I spent with her in my friend's castle, I never saw any one but Madame —— except on one occasion.

"Then three men in uniform came to see me, one of whom, Madame told me, was the great General Charette, the other two were his friends.

"My illness lasted a long time and developed curious symptoms.

"At one time all my limbs were frightfully swollen and I could scarcely stand, when suddenly boils broke out all over my body, the scars of which I retain to this day. This marked the crisis of my illness. After that, my acute pain abated and my recovery gradually set in.

"In spite of the profound secrecy which had been observed as to my whereabouts, somebody must have discovered my hiding-place and betrayed it to the Government.

"For one night, after we had all gone to sleep, some gendarmes forced an entrance into the Castle, and dragging me out of my bed, carried me off to prison."

CHAPTER II

Monsieur B ——Release from prison—Flight from France—Terrible tragedy —Flight to England—Arrested in mid-ocean—A mysterious cross-examination—Imprisoned anew—Released through Joséphine's intervention—Pichegru despatched to the Comte de Provence—The latter's treachery—Flight to Germany—Fresh arrest—Four years in a dungeon —Released by two friends—Alleged motives for Joséphine's interest in Louis XVII.—Succession of disasters in Germany—Taken prisoner by Napoleon's officers—Friendship with Friedrichs—Flight with Friedrichs—Separation from Friedrichs—A friendly stranger—Arrival at Berlin.

"DURING my stay in the Castle I was well aware that a certain M. B——, whose name I shall give later, was in collusion with Madame ——. He was assisted by two other friends, one was a Genevan, the other was a lady who had been formerly attached to my dear mother's court.

These faithful three supplied all our wants during our sojourn in the castle.

I only saw M. B—— at a distance, disguised as an old peasant, having no nearer aquaintance with him at that time.

When I was thrown into prison, M. B—— corresponded with Madame de Beauharnais, by whose good offices I was set at liberty. I was then placed under M. B——'s care. With him I found a young girl named Marie, and Jean, whom he called his huntsman. His real name was Montmorin, and I feel sure that as my story proceeds all my readers will be filled with admiration for him.

Henceforward M. B—— and Jean managed all my affairs.

They first sent for a man and his son—a boy of exactly my age—and gave him enough money to pay for his passage to America.[1]

[1] Though not stated in the text, we imagine that the child was to be sent to America as a blind. Evidently, as the context shows, however, the man was in the enemy's pay.

Having arranged this, we ourselves set out for Venice, where we stayed for some time. Thence we went to Trieste, passing afterwards into Italy, where I was secretly protected by the holy Father Pius VI.

He was indeed a holy Father to me, in every sense of the word. I never knew a nobler or more venerable man.

It was in Italy that Madame —— rejoined me with her second husband.

After our happy meeting, the man and his son, who we had arranged should go to America before we left the Castle, found us out and begged to stay with us as our servants.

Alas! this peaceful state of things was very short-lived.

The Republican army having invaded Italy, my troubles began again. I was soon forced to seek another hiding-place. We therefore buried our little hoard of valuables and prepared to take flight in the night.

But we had tarried too long and a shocking tragedy was the result.

I will not go into details here of the horrible treachery to which we were victims.

The man and his son suddenly disappeared together, M. B—— and poor young Marie were both brutally murdered, and the house in which we were living and which belonged to a friend of the Pope, was burnt over our heads.

The disasters which befell me at this time are almost incredible, but having no wish to excite my readers' pity, I shall not enlarge on them beyond what is necessary for the pleading of my cause.

In taking flight this time I hoped to reach England, but I was arrested in mid-ocean and brought back to France.

My sole surviving protector, Montmorin, was the only friend left me in the world. Unknown to me, he was secretly following all my movements.

The instant I landed in France I was once more thrust into prison, where five days later I received a visit from two strangers. After a very formal bow, one of them seated himself at my little table, and producing a roll of papers

from his pocket began to ply me with questions, his companion meanwhile remaining standing.

"What is your name?"

"Charles-Louis," I answered quietly, without showing the least surprise at the man's imperious voice and manner.

"Who are your parents? What are their names?"

"King Louis XVI. was my father, and Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, was my mother."

"At what date did your parents leave the Tuileries?"

"I don't know the exact date."

"Was it during the summer or the winter?"

"It must have been in the summer, for I remember that the sky was clear and bright, and that the sun was very hot. It was in the early morning too."

"Did you fly with them on foot or in a carriage?"

"We didn't fly at all, we all went on foot."

"By whom were you accompanied?"

"I was with my parents and my sister and aunt."

"Yes, but there were other people besides; why don't you mention their names?"

"Yes, I know that there were several others, but amongst them all, I can only recollect the name of my governess, Madame de Tourzel."

"Did you walk or were you carried?"

"I walked between my mother and Madame de Tourzel, holding a hand of each."

"Where did they take you?"

"I don't know the names of the different places to which we went."

"But at any rate, you can describe them?"

"Yes, it seemed to me that we were in a large theatre."

"Did you remain there long?"

"No, they made us go up into a kind of box, in front of which there was a lattice work, which however did not prevent us from seeing and hearing all that went on in the Hall beneath us. The stall reminded me of a great square packing-case."

Upon that my interlocutor burst out laughing, probably at the comparison I had just made.

"What was taking place in the Hall?"

"I couldn't tell you. Though I heard a confused sound of voices, I couldn't make out a single word."

"On leaving that place, where were you next taken?"

"After going through a sort of yard, planted with trees, we were taken to another building made up of little blocks, and in the most distant of these I remained with Madame de Tourzel."

"Yes, and after that?"

"Two days later I was taken to the Temple with my family."

"Who shared your imprisonment?"

"My parents, my sister and aunt, and besides them, Monsieur Hue de Chamilly, Madame de Tourzel, and her daughter Pauline, the Princesse de Lamballe and another lady whose name I have forgotten."

"Were you all confined in the same apartment?"

"Oh no, there were several rooms, we each had one of our own. All the same, my sister and I slept in my mother's room."

"Then you never saw your father again from that day forward?"

"On the contrary, at first he was with us nearly the whole day, and we were often taken to his room in the morning. But after a time he was isolated from us, and then I only saw him once more. That was on the evening when he took his last farewell of us."

"On that occasion did your father come into your apartments, or did you go to his?"

"We, that is I and my mother and sister and aunt were taken to the room where my father usually dined and where we found him awaiting us."

"Was your father alone?"

"No, Clery was with him."

"No one else?"

"No one."

"And after leaving your father, where were you taken?"

"To my mother's apartments."

"And from that moment you always remained with your mother?"

"Yes, until I was torn from her arms and delivered over to the mercies of a brutal gaoler."

"To whom do you refer?"

"To that monster Simon."

"Who effected your escape from the Temple?"

"I don't know."

"But how was it managed?"

"I was put into a wicker basket and smuggled out of the Temple in that way. At least I always imagine it was done in that manner."

"You must have had very careless keepers to have succeeded in doing all that."

"As far as I know my keepers at that time were a woman, who had been placed quite recently about me, and a public official, both of whom were no doubt in the secret."

"Where did they transport you?"

"That I couldn't say, for, having lost consciousness as soon as I was put into the basket, I knew nothing more until, on recovering my senses, I found myself in bed with a woman standing beside me, who I had never seen before."

"What was her name?"

"I never knew it. I always called her 'Mamma,' because she bestowed a real mother's love and care upon me."

"How came you to be separated from this woman?"

"One night I was forcibly dragged away from her house."

"By whom?"

"I don't know."

"Where were you taken?"

"I don't know."

"But surely you can remember the place where you were before you embarked this last time?"

"Of course I can, I can see it plainly before my eyes at this moment."

"Very well then, name the place."

"That's just what I can't do."

"Well, at least, you can give the names of the friends who were so devoted to you."

"I never so much as heard them."

"Now you are lying!"

At this insult, which was hurled at me in the most offensive tone, all the blood rushed to my face, and I could not repress a movement of intense indignation, which was not wasted on my interrogator. For presently, he added ironically. "Then you mean to say that you don't know the names of the people with whom you actually lived. That's not credible. It's a lie, I tell you."

On hearing this insult for a second time, I had the greatest difficulty in restraining my anger. But realising my precarious situation, I pulled myself together, and answered as calmly as I could.

"No," I said, "I am not lying. I have answered all the questions that you have seen fit to ask me with absolute truthfulness. But now it is my turn to ask you by what right you are here to question me, for I don't know who you are."

"And what does that matter to you, what concern is it of yours to know who I am and what my name is. All the same, if you tell me the name of your friends I may perhaps consent to tell you who I am and by what name I am known here."

"At that price I wouldn't tell you a single name, even if I could."

"Don't be too hasty, for you may very possibly have good reason to repent your obstinacy. For let me tell you that it is only by being absolutely straightforward and giving me the information that I demand, that you can hope to improve your condition."

"I have already told you, Monsieur, that the devoted

friends who accompanied me on my wanderings and protected me, never told me either their names or their qualifications."

"Then did you never question them on these points?"

"I did once or twice."

"Well?"

"They gave me to understand that any confidential communication of that kind might have very fatal consequences for them in the event of their falling into the hands either of their own enemies or of mine. Remembering the striking proofs they had given me of their devotion and fidelity to my cause, that explanation sufficed me, and feeling absolute confidence in them, I continued to bestow my own upon them, without again asking for theirs in return."

"At any rate you can tell me the name of the last individual who was your recent companion."

"That you probably know better than I do."

Upon that my interlocutor bent forward and whispered something into his companion's ear, but though he spoke so low, I distinctly heard him say, "What forethought! what astuteness; we certainly have to do with very dangerous people."

I didn't quite grasp his meaning, whilst he began once more.

"Well, at all events, you can surely tell me where you parted from this last friend?"

But my eyes were being gradually opened now, and I began to apprehend the dangers which might accrue to my friends and myself if I answered these questions. Wondering if I had already said too much, I resolved not to answer another question, and conveyed this determination by dumb signs.

Nevertheless my visitor persisted.

"Who was the man and had he any profession?"

My only reply was to shake my head.

"Don't you hear what I say?" was the next question.

Again my only answer was the shake of the head.

"Am I to understand that you don't mean to answer any more questions?"

Here I made it quite clear to him that he had guessed rightly.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "I see you don't mean to say anything more, all right!"

And hastily turning over the leaves of his voluminous notebook, he made an entry on the last page, to which he affixed a kind of stamp, and darting an ominous look at me, took himself and his companion out of my cell.

I saw them depart with mingled feelings of contempt and indifference, but I was perfectly satisfied that all the answers which I had given had been duly and exactly entered in their notes.

It had begun to grow dusk when my visitors arrived, and it was well after nightfall when they left me.

I had hardly fallen asleep, however, when I was roused by the entrance of two more strangers. These latter took me out of the prison and put me on board a little sailing vessel, on which we made a very short passage.

On disembarking we found a carriage awaiting us, into which I was ordered to get, my companions following me.

In this carriage, which was carefully closed, we continued our journey, and even when we stopped to change horses I was not allowed to get out. Consequently I had no idea in what direction we were going, or what was the object of our journey.

At length at the end of several days we came to a dead stop, and my keepers left the carriage. They stood whispering together for some time, then through the half-opened door I could see one of them hastening away and signing to his companion to await his return. After the delay of a whole hour he came back and ordered the postilion to start again.

At last we did apparently reach our destination. I was ordered to get out of the carriage, and we then went for some distance on foot, but my eyes were carefully blind-

folded. When the bandage was at last removed, I found myself in a little room with an old woman, in whose care, no doubt, I was going to be left.

Soon forgetting her presence, I took out of my breast pocket the portraits of my family, which Marie had given me, and whilst I gazed on these precious treasures, I seemed for the moment to forget all my present miseries.

I was still feasting my eyes on these beloved miniatures when the two strangers entered the room, continuing a low-toned conversation with each other, without taking any notice of me. This gave me time to conceal the portraits without attracting their attention.

At a commanding gesture from the elder of the two men, I rose and approached him.

"The imprudence of your friends," he said, "has sealed your fate and made it imperative that you should be put out of the way. As, however, we have no wish to shed your blood, the only form of death to which we shall condemn you is the death of your name. You must, therefore, renounce all claims on your paternal inheritance, and if in the future any traitors should attempt to champion your cause and present you to the public, you may tell them that we have a certain person on our side, who is well known to them, and who certainly will serve perfectly to replace you."

"My friends," I replied, "are too much in earnest to be intimidated by any threats. I know the extent of their devotion, and I have full faith in the sacredness of my own cause."

"All right, then! your friends will certainly perish and their death will be of no service to you."

"Your threats," I replied, "are useless, for they will never make me swerve from my intentions."

"Whatever those intentions may be, they won't enable you to escape your fate. So now," added the speaker, looking steadily at me, "here are our orders and instructions."

Up to this point the man had been only insolent to me, but from this moment he changed his tone and became absolutely brutal.

Adopting what he imagined was an imposing attitude, and raising his voice, he continued:

"You are required to make a formal renunciation of your birthright and all the privileges thereto attaching. At this price you will be provided with a safe and protected home in a monastery."

"You can kill me if you like!" I cried, "seeing that I am completely in your power, but you will never, *never* succeed in making me renounce my birthright nor will I repudiate the noble name which I bear. So you may as well leave me alone, Monsieur. Indeed, I must request you to be good enough to withdraw now."

"Your mother refused to come to any terms," I heard the wretch mutter between his teeth, as he took his departure; "you are her true son, and you will share her fate."

Therewith the two men took their leave.

After having undergone so many vicissitudes, I wondered what there could be still left for me to fear."

The answers given by the prince on this occasion have been faithfully recorded as far as his memory served, and though they may present some trifling discrepancies with certain facts, the substance of his evidence is fundamentally correct. It is, at any rate, quite obvious, that after this interview, his persecutors came to the conclusion that if his life were to be spared, it was absolutely necessary to efface the striking resemblance he bore to his own family.

Consequently, in order to achieve this end, three men in black masks appeared on the following day in their unfortunate victim's cell.

Our heart bleeds at the description of the barbarous ill-treatment inflicted on this royal martyr.

Bursting suddenly into his cell, these three ruffians peremptorily dismissed the female keeper (Louis XVII. was

always persuaded the latter was a man in disguise), and then proceeded to work their wicked will. Having bound their prisoner to the back of a chair, one villain seized his head and held it tightly, the other meanwhile produced a miniature and carefully compared its details with the prince's features.

Then at a given signal the third wretch rushed forward and struck him repeatedly in the face with a cruel instrument, which was more like a bundle of sharply pointed needles than anything else.

In an instant his face was bleeding profusely from the innumerable but almost imperceptible wounds.

Having accomplished this fiendish brutality, they then proceeded to wash the poor sufferer's face with a sponge dipped in some corrosive acid, which caused him the most intolerable pain. That done, they left the cell, not having uttered a single word or sound, beyond an occasional satanic chuckle, during the whole time.

The woman keeper then returned and hastened to release the prince from his fetters, and did all in her power to relieve his sufferings. These, however, only increased, for presently his face began to swell most terribly, till he was nearly beside himself with agony.

When the first stage of acute inflammation had subsided, the prince was then attacked by a maddening irritation all over his face, till at last unable to bear it any longer he scratched his wounds with all his might. He then realised that his face was a mass of scabs, which presently fell away like a mask from his features, whilst the blood gushed out in a perfect torrent.

On the whole this violent measure relieved him, for from that moment the swelling began to go down, and he was gradually able to open his eyes, which owing to the inflammation had been nearly closed till then.

His skin was riddled with pin-pricks, from the scars of which he was never entirely free, but his features were not permanently disfigured by this diabolical ill-

treatment, as his persecutors had evidently intended that they should be.

"In that prison," says Naundorf—"where I was cruelly ill-treated—I remained till the end of 1803.

Then, thanks to Montmorin's appeal to the Empress Joséphine, I was at length released; the Empress having succeeded with Fouché's help in outwitting Napoleon.

Throughout that winter and until the beginning of 1804, my friends were very active in my cause, and Pichegru was despatched to interview the Comte de Provence and tell him all about me.

It seems hardly credible that my own uncle, actuated by his overweening ambition, and totally insensible to all feelings of kinship, should have abused the confidence reposed in him, and taking advantage of the information supplied by Pichegru, he denounced my friends to the Government, and betrayed my hiding-place.

Once more forced to flight, we directed our steps towards Ettenheim in Germany, where the Duc d'Enghien was then residing. The fact of my survival had been confided to the duke when he paid his secret visit to Paris.

But I was arrested again in the neighbourhood of Strasbourg, and informally imprisoned in the fortress of that city to await the advent of gendarmes.

On their arrival I was thrust into a post-chaise, in which we travelled without stopping for three days and nights. In the middle of the third night we came to a sudden halt, and I was ordered to leave the carriage and made to walk a considerable distance. Finally we reached a very high building; here we stopped.

My companions unlocked a door which opened into a long passage with so many windings that I was soon completely puzzled as to where I was being taken.

At length, however, I was thrown into a *blackly*-dark cell, "*D'une obscurité noire*"—having no opening in its walls but the one door.

There I was locked in,[1] and I presently heard my gaoler's footsteps dying away in the distance.

How long I remained alone in the oppressive darkness, I can't say, but after a time the bolts were withdrawn and a man with a dark lantern came into my cell, carrying some soup strongly flavoured with wine. He ordered me to swallow it in his presence. He then bade me lie down, and went his way.

The hot soup revived me, and after my prolonged sufferings I soon fell asleep.

When I awoke I sought vainly for a ray of light, for it seemed impossible that there could be no window in my cell. As the darkness however continued, I came to the conclusion that I must have slept through the day and had only awoken at night.

I was the more inclined to think so when my gaoler again appeared with a light. He brought no nice wine soup with him this time, only a pitcher of water and some bread, which he set down on my wooden table. The loaf weighed about four pounds, and was curiously baked in the shape of a huge screw.

The man left me without uttering a word.

Sad as I felt I soon fell asleep again, and once more awoke to find myself enveloped in this mysterious darkness.

Being really hungry by that time, I got up and groped my way to the table. There I found the pitcher, but—the bread was all gone! From that I concluded that my cell was most certainly shared by some other living creatures.

I was too hungry to go to sleep again, and tried to make out what was going on around me.

Presently, however, I was gladdened by the sound of my gaoler's steps and the subsequent unbolting of my door. The man reminded me of one of those weird spectres who figure in old legends. He brought me some more bread

[1] It was in the underground cells of the dungeon at Vincennes that Louis XVII. was imprisoned at this time. See *La Légitimité*, December 1904, February, March, and June 1905, March 1906.

and water, but when I begged him to tell me who had eaten my roll, he made no reply, neither would he tell me where I was. A deaf-mute could not have been more irresponsive.

When he was gone, I instantly fell upon my bread and ate up half, then after drinking some water I lay down again.

On awaking I sought for the remains of my roll, but again it had disappeared, so for a second time I had to endure the pangs of hunger till the gaoler's next visit.

My eyes meanwhile having grown more used to the darkness, I was able faintly to make out something of my surroundings. In the ceiling above my head I discovered a small air-hole which admitted an infinitesimal shaft of light into my living tomb. I could just see my hand when I passed it before my face, and I could make out the outline of the air-hole.

This was all that was faintly visible in my surroundings.

For the next few days the invisible thieves continued to steal my food, till at last, my wits being sharpened by hunger, it occurred to me to hide the loaf in my clothes during my sleep. But that did not mend matters, my bread disappeared all the same.

Determined now to solve the mystery, I hid the roll as usual, but only pretended to go to sleep.

Very soon I was aware that scores of animals, which in the darkness looked the size of rabbits, were swarming all over my body. Trying to clutch at one, I was bitten so severely that the blood streamed from my hand, and I still keep the scar of that savage bite.

After that I concluded that if I wished to enjoy the whole of my bread, I must eat it all at once, otherwise it would most certainly be shared by my long-tailed companions, which I rightly guessed to be huge rats.

The noise they made when they found no food was so appalling that sometimes for peace sake I threw them some crumbs, which they grunted over like pigs. After all, they were better behaved than men, for though they stole my

food, they didn't attack my person, whereas my fellow-creatures have assaulted both my life and my honour.

My wretched bed consisted of a heap of straw in the corner of my cell, with a blanket to cover me. As I was given neither fresh linen nor clothes, there came a time when my shirt ceased to exist. Both my coat and trousers also fell into such rags that I had to wrap myself in the blanket, which, thanks to the rats, was perforated with holes.

I was nineteen when I was first shut up in this living tomb, into which no ray of either sunshine nor moonlight ever penetrated. By degrees I lost all count of time, but judging from the decay of my clothes, I imagined that I had been in that terrible dungeon for at least fifty years.

I grew to know every tiny sound in my cell, and I could detect my gaoler's footsteps ever so far off. Save for that sound I only heard one other from the outer world. That was the rumble of the soldiers' drums, which seemed to me like the echo of distant thunder.

What wonder that as I lay alone in my wretched cell I felt as if I were stranded on one tiny corner of the Universe, utterly friendless and hopelessly forgotten.

Truly, I was *more* than *half*-buried alive.

My hair grew into long shaggy curls ; when I touched my unshaven face it seemed covered with thick fur like an animal's, whilst my nails had grown so long that they broke off in bits, causing me real pain and discomfort. Was it surprising that I felt beside myself with misery and despair ?

One night I was suddenly roused from my sleep by the entrance of two individuals, who actually called me by my name.

As I sprang to my feet, wrapt in my wretched blanket, I must have presented the most deporable spectacle.

No wonder that my friends were horrified at my revolting appearance.

"Why, what is the meaning of this ?" they gasped.

"Oh! it's all right, it's he sure enough," said my gaoler, who was standing by with his lantern—he had a terrible scar, that gaoler, on his left cheek,[1] and seizing my hand he pointed to a scar on one of my fingers, the origin of which was well known to both my friends.

My kind rescuers lost no time in hurrying me out of my cell, but directly I got into the open air I fainted away.

When I recovered consciousness I found myself in a carriage, which was flying along as if it had wings.

We arrived that same night at a new hiding-place, where I was concealed in an isolated room. Here I remained a close prisoner for fear of being again arrested.

Unfortunately, in spite of all the care that my friends lavished upon me, I soon became so seriously ill that it was only a marvel that I ever recovered.

Before I was really convalescent my pursuers were again on my track, so I had once more to fly for my life, with Montmorin as my companion. Worn out with anxiety and fatigue, we reached Frankfort-on-Maine, where we rested for some days and exchanged our clothes at a Jew's house.

We were then in the spring of 1809, and I learnt from Montmorin that I had been shut up in that terrible prison for about four years.

I was now twenty-four, so that, roughly speaking, I had spent seventeen years of my life in prison.

Knowing that Joséphine had been my protectress, I asked Montmorin why she had left me so long in such misery.

Thereupon he explained to me that the Emperor had

[1] In a letter written to Madame Amélie, eldest daughter of Naundorf, by Madame Louis Ducrey, daughter of Bremond, Louis XVII.'s secretary, July 2, 1872, she alludes to this gaoler, viz.: "About 1835 I recollect that my father entertained a certain German political refugee, named Strohmeyer, who told him that he was well acquainted with a man who was known as the 'Balafré'—the scarred one—on account of the deep scar which seamed his left cheek. This man told Strohmeyer that he had been Louis XVII.'s gaoler in a Government prison for four years. M. Strohmeyer told my father that he had been able to verify the gaoler's statement, because, later on, he had made the acquaintance of Louis XVII. himself, who was at that time living in obscurity under the name of Naundorf."

been cunning enough to weaken his wife's interest in me, by telling her that he intended to secure the succession to her son Eugène after his own death. Woman-like, Joséphine had not been able to resist this tempting bait, and in plain parlance, I had gone to the wall in consequence.

"All the same," added Montmorin, "it is owing to her that you have regained your liberty, for if she had not revealed your whereabouts we could never have traced you. But don't imagine that in so doing she was actuated by any generous motive; all Joséphine does in your cause is from pure self-interest, and because she knows that if anything happened to you, her husband would divorce her and marry again. That is why you have recovered your freedom now."

During our imprisonment in the Temple, my mother, anticipating the possibility of my being rescued by my friends, thought well to write down a list of certain peculiar marks on my person, which might serve to identify me, if the need for doing so should ever arise.

This paper, as well as other evidence, was in Montmorin's keeping, and these he now sewed into the lining of the collar of my greatcoat, beseeching me to keep them most carefully, as they were likely to be of the greatest value to me.[1]

As soon as we had received a letter from our friends in France enclosing a note of credit, we left Frankfort and proceeded to a town in the valley of the Elbe. There we made ourselves known to the Duke of Brunswick. He gave us a letter of recommendation to the Prussian Government.

After a short rest at Chemnitz, we set out for Dresden. Here we were refused an entrance into the city, which obliged us to make a long détour in order to reach Prussia.

I forget the name of the village where we stayed to have supper and to spend the night.

[1] Louis XVII. describes here exactly the peculiar marks on his person which we have already mentioned in Book I. chap. x.

We were so worn out with fatigue that directly after supper we went to bed and promptly fell asleep. But not for long.

In the middle of the night we were rudely awakened by some gendarmes who arrested us on the charge of being spies, and dragged us before Major V. Schill, who was commanding a regiment in the neighbourhood.

After seeing the Duke of Brunswick's letter, the Major was quite satisfied and kindly invited us to remain with him under his protection.

So we marched with the soldiers from place to place, pursued by a far larger body of Westphalians, who finally came up with us and fell upon Major V. Schill's men in the streets of a little town.

Being no longer able to protect us, the kind Major sent us away under a small escort of cavalry commanded by a young German officer, Count Vedel, I think.[1]

Before we had gone far, however, we were surrounded by the enemy, and as they gave us no quarter, we had to fight for our lives.

The young count, having a good horse, was the only one able to make his escape. My faithful Montmorin fell beside me, his skull cleft in two. I was badly wounded, whilst my horse was killed under me. After lying on the field for a considerable time, I was conveyed to a fortress at Wesel, whence many of the German prisoners were despatched by Napoleon's orders to work in the galleys at Toulon.

I too was sent back to France, being moved from one prison to another and treated like a common felon. I did not possess a sou, for I had been robbed of everything that I possessed on the battlefield, except my greatcoat, which I found on my bed at Wesel.

During our marches, the French soldiers treated us shamefully. I became so ill on the road in consequence,

[1] Probably Wedel, as there were two officers of that name in Schill's regiment at that time.

that at last they left me behind, quite insensible, in a roadside village.

A soaking rain which drenched me to the skin gradually restored me to consciousness, but I was too weak to stand up.

Presently a woman and her daughter came to offer me their help. I was parched with thirst, but could only move my lips without being able to articulate. Guessing my need, the woman brought me some milk, which I drank greedily.

Later I was taken in a cart to a hospital in the neighbouring town.

There I fell in with a private belonging to Schill's company, named Friedrichs—the French called him simply Fréderic.[1]

Having recognised me, and feeling that he could trust me, Friedrichs persuaded me to attempt to escape with him. As soon therefore as I was convalescent, we took advantage of an unusually stormy night to go downstairs into a cellar underneath the house. It was packed with huge wooden cases like coffins, so that it looked much more like a vault than a cellar. A little oval window represented the only means of exit, and this was obstructed by a cross-work of iron.

Using some of the cases as a ladder, however, we soon removed the bars, for the iron being rusty was easily broken, and presently we found ourselves outside in an enclosure with very high walls. This was guarded by two sentinels, who in order to escape from the storm had shut themselves inside their boxes.

It behoved us to be extremely careful lest we should arouse their attention by the slightest noise.

Friedrichs was the first to scale the high wall, which he mounted by standing on my shoulders. He carried with him a bag, the contents of which I never guessed then.

[1] It is quite possible that "Fréderic" was only his Christian name ; it is also possible that he was a political agent who was employed by the authorities to conduct Louis XVII. back into Germany.

Now it served the purpose of a short rope, by the help of which I tried to climb up after my companion. I failed in my attempt, however, and fell backwards with a thud!

My heart was in my throat!

The sound was heard by the sentinels, and a prolonged cry of "Qui vive!" rang out on every side.

Spurred by my excessive terror and, as I believe, specially helped by Providence, I made another desperate effort, and a minute later found myself beside Friedrichs on the top of the wall. We dared not jump to the opposite side, so let ourselves drop into a deep ditch at the foot of the wall.

Why we were not followed and recaptured, I shall never understand, specially as in the drop, I dislocated my ankle, so that Friedrichs had to carry me on his back to an adjacent wood.

Here we hid ourselves in the dense undergrowth.

Friedrichs then managed to push my dislocated ankle so cleverly into place that by degrees I regained the use of my foot.

The storm continued to rage for some time longer, the vivid flashes of lightning serving at intervals to show us our whereabouts. When it abated, we flattered ourselves that we had accomplished a considerable distance.

Great, therefore, was our dismay to discover at daybreak that we were no further off from the hospital than when we first set out, for, misled by the darkness, we had spent the time in going round and round in the same circle.

Presently, alarmed by the sound of approaching footsteps, we hastily fled into a field, where the corn was so tall and thick that we could hide amongst it. There we passed the whole day until nightfall.

Never shall I forget those hours. We had been soaked through by the storm, but now we were roasted by the burning sun. We had nothing to eat all that day, and could only moisten our lips by sucking the wheat-ears.

At nightfall, however, we emerged from our hiding-place and started forth.

But we were so tormented with hunger and thirst that directly we came to a fruit garden belonging to a lonely cottage, we clambered over the hedge and began to rob the trees. In a twinkling we had filled our pockets with green apples and pears, which were to do duty for all the meals we had missed that day.

Then we continued our journey, hiding ourselves in woods by day and only moving on during the night. Having no passport, we were obliged to do this.

After innumerable vicissitudes, we finally reached Germany.

Here I had the overwhelming sorrow of losing Friedrichs.

It happened in this way. Throughout our wanderings he had always undertaken to cater for our wants, whenever he judged the opportunity was favourable for doing so. He was wonderfully successful in his raids, always returning with bread, cheese, fruit, &c., whilst I remained at a given spot in charge of his bag.

After a long night's tramp in the pouring rain, we arrived at the Westphalian border.

The day was slowly breaking when we took refuge in a forest. Finding a tree with a huge hollow trunk, we got inside it, waiting for a favourable moment for Friedrichs to start out in quest of food. We always made a point of halting close to some village.

In due time Friedrichs set off as usual, whilst I remained behind to mount guard over the bag. Feeling no anxiety on my comrade's account, I soon fell asleep.

Presently a great black dog found me out inside the tree. He was followed by his master, who was a shepherd keeping a flock close by, and who promptly dragged me out of my hiding-place.

Concluding that I was a deserter from the German army, he was filled with compassion for me. For the old man had a son of his own in Napoleon's ranks. He tried to

persuade me to remain with him till the evening, assuring me that he could hide me for days together in his hayloft.

I explained to him that I was not alone, and that I was waiting the return of a comrade, who had gone to the village in search of food. Thereupon the shepherd asked for a description of Friedrichs.

When I had given it, he shook his head, saying, "Ah! you'll never see that poor fellow again, the Knights of the Rope have got hold of him. I saw them just now, dragging him along to the next town."

"But who are the Knights of the Rope?" I asked in great dismay.

"Oh! a new kind of gendarmes called *strickreiter*," said the shepherd, who finally persuaded me to accept his hospitality and to relinquish my intention of trying to rescue Friedrichs. Whilst he was talking to me, he had already shouldered my bag by way of hastening my decision.

Towards evening I followed him to his cottage, where I found his old wife.

"Here is somebody's poor son," said the shepherd, "let's be good to him, mother, then perhaps some one will be kind to our own boy far away in Spain." Thereupon both the old people lifted up their voices and wept.

After sharing their supper with me, they took me to the hayloft. Nothing could exceed their kindness, and I remained with them till the middle of the third day.

Then the good shepherd led me far away from the village on to the highroad, where he gave me back poor Friedrichs' bag. As he bade me farewell, he gave me three silver pieces, some bread, and half a pudding, saying, "It's just as well for us both that you should know neither my name nor the name of the village."

Therewith he disappeared in a twinkling.

An old soldier himself, he was afraid of being compromised by the imprudence of a youngster, whom he believed to be a deserter. But the recollection of the quaint

appearance of my kind old friend has always haunted my memory very pleasantly.

Pursuing my journey, I soon found myself in Saxony, where the shepherd assured me I should be safe enough.

At the same time he advised me to adhere to Friedrichs' plan of sleeping out-of-doors. So I rested during the day and spent the night on the roads. Following Friedrichs' advice, I meant to try and join the German army, and intended to go to Berlin for that purpose.

Accordingly, I asked the way to that city of every one I met.

Whether they misunderstood my question, or whether they thought it was a high joke to misdirect me, I can't say, but they gave me such misleading directions, that after trying a dozen different roads, I finally discovered that I was going in a diametrically opposite direction to Berlin.

I had, moreover, strayed into a large forest, which was so dense with trees that it seemed impossible to find any way out of it. Dying with thirst, I fell upon some blackberries, and was so eager to hunt for more that I entirely lost my bearings.

Whilst I was still vainly trying to find the beaten track, I heard the sound of a post-chaise some way off, and following the direction whence it came, I presently discovered that I was close to a highroad, upon which I made out a vehicle in the far distance, which was coming my way.

I seated myself on a big stone, bearing the inscription "Dr. Martin Luther," and awaited the passing of that chaise.

When it approached me, I entreated the postilion to tell me if I was on the right road for Berlin.

Thereupon a young man inside the carriage bade the postilion halt, and began questioning me.

Evidently filled with compassion for my plight, he told me to get into his chaise, and as we drove along he continued his questions. At last he asked me what I had in my bag.

"I can't tell you," I said, "it belonged to my comrade, and I never opened it."

"How odd," he cried, snatching it from me and opening it himself. Having extracted nothing but rags, he burst out laughing and advised me throw it away, as it might possibly compromise me. Seizing one of the rags, he was just going to fling it on to the road, when he suddenly paused.

"I say," he exclaimed, "there's something inside this," and producing his penknife he slit the rag open.

Several gold coins were sewn up in it. Altogether we found more than 1600 francs concealed in this way in the old bag.

"Well, your comrade was a noble fellow," said my new friend, "for he evidently preferred losing his money to risking your safety by trying to recover it."

By this time we had arrived at Witenberg, and I alighted with my companion at the "Golden Bunch of Grapes."

My first care was to procure fresh clothes, whilst my new friend shaved me with his own hands and cut my hair, so that I soon looked quite a different being.

"And now," said my unknown benefactor, "how will you cross the frontier into Prussia? for they are very particular, you know, and you have no passport. Well, we shall have to manage something."

Finally he borrowed somebody's carriage, which conconveyed us to Treinpretsen, the first town on the Prussian border.

There he took me into his post-chaise again, as far as Potsdam, where he engaged another private carriage to take me to Berlin.

Thither he himself preceded me, taking rooms for me at the 'Black Eagle.'"[1]

[1] M. Provins says: "The Duc de Normandie never discovered who his travelling companion was. Was he a secret agent who was on the fugitive's track—his curiously timely appearance on the scene greatly favours this theory—or was he really a man called Naundorf who gave up his passport, or was he merely in possession of some other safe-conduct which did not refer to himself any more than it did to Louis XVII.?" (*Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. i. p. 281).

Arrival at the "Black Eagle"

It was there, as our readers will remember, that we first made Naundorf's acquaintance, and it was at this inn that we left him in our last chapter, in order to follow his wanderings from the moment of his evasion from the Temple to the late autumn day when he arrived in Berlin.

CHAPTER III

Unaccountable attitude adopted by the Prussian authorities towards Naundorf—Naundorf appeals to Lecoq—Gives Lecoq some valuable papers—Naundorf ordered to leave Berlin for Spandau—Louis XVII. tries to re-unite himself with his family—Interview between the Dauphine and Marassin—Friendly relations between Louis XVII. and the Duc de Berri—Assassination of latter—Louvel—Mysterious fate of Théodor Clairnel—Louis XVIII.'s behaviour on the occasion of the Duc de Berri's death—Reported interviews between Louis XVIII. and the Duc de Berri.

In following the story of Naundorf's vicissitudes in Germany, it is curious to note how on the one hand he was mysteriously and to all appearances unaccountably protected by certain high functionaries, whilst on the other he was so persistently harassed and ill-treated that one is forced to believe that he was the victim of a carefully organised persecution.

Now a harmless watchmaker—even though he were an alien—seeking to earn his bread honestly, and declared by his neighbours to be a remarkably well-behaved man, would scarcely have provoked such treatment even in *one* town, let alone in every single place where he settled.

Neither is it logical to suppose that such a high Government official as Lecoq would have taken him so readily under his protection had he been a mere waif and stray.

Nor is it likely that he would have used his influence to secure to Naundorf the rights and privileges of a citizen of Spandau, for the enjoyment of which the watchmaker possessed no single qualification, if he had not known perfectly well with whom he was dealing.

It was very soon after Naundorf's arrival in Berlin that he came into personal contact with Lecoq.

For in spite of his endeavours to remain in obscurity,

poor Naundorf had not long been in his humble lodgings in the Schützenstrasse before some malicious person set the police on his track, with the result that he was cited before the local authorities on the charge of having no licence as a clockmaker.

Naundorf was required to produce his passport, his birth certificate, and a written character testifying to his good conduct from the mayor of his last place of residence.

In his despair at being unable to produce any of these documents, Naundorf, acting on the advice of the kindly widow who served as his housekeeper, wrote a letter appealing to M. Lecoq, who was himself a Frenchman, and the head of the whole police force throughout Prussia.

Lecoq came at once to see Naundorf and to inquire if he had really written that letter himself. He was so friendly to the latter from the first moment of his arrival that he gained his confidence at once, so that in the course of the interview, Naundorf actually cut open the collar of his coat and showed the papers it contained, by way of establishing his identity.

Lecoq instantly recognised Marie Antoinette's writing as well as Louis XVI.'s seal and signature which were attached to another document.

"After examining the papers," says Naundorf, "he left me, saying he must seek instructions from the king as to my case. Next day he returned and asked me to let him have some of my papers to submit to his Majesty.

"At this I demurred, saying that the king ought to allow *me* to be presented to him.

"Thereupon Lecoq hastened to assure me that his Majesty would certainly see me as soon as his minister, Hardenberg, had examined my papers.

"I then submitted all my documents to Lecoq, but he only took two, the one in my mother's writing and the other which was signed and sealed by my father. He then left me with the assurance that I should experience no further annoyance from the local authorities."

Poor Naundorf! In exchange for those priceless papers —which he never saw again—he received his clockmaker's licence, coupled with orders to preserve a strict incognito and to leave Berlin for Spandau as soon as possible!

According to Naundorf, Lecoq supplied the necessary funds to defray the expense of his removal from his own purse.

So here he was on the move again.

Frau Sonnenfeld, his faithful old housekeeper, accompanied him to his new abode.

On December 8th, 1812, the son of Louis XVI. was accorded the privileges of a citizen of Spandau.

"Thus," remarked Jules Favres, when pleading his case in the suit which took place in Paris in February 1874, "thus Naundorf acquired the freedom of the city of Spandau by order of Lecoq, though he possessed neither the qualifications nor the certificates which were otherwise so rigorously exacted from any ordinary candidate for the citizenship."

"To be persecuted one day and protected the other," says M. Provins, "was Louis XVII.'s fate during the whole of his stay in Prussia."

And why?

The reason is not far to seek. Although the Prussian Government was well aware that Naundorf was the rightful heir to the French throne, they were in such abject terror of the Emperor, who had just reduced them to subjection, that having once freed themselves of his presence within their borders, they dared not provoke his displeasure by acknowledging Naundorf as the son of Louis XVI.

At the same time, fully appreciating the advantages which might accrue to them from such a valuable political possession as the secret of the clockmaker's identity, they extended a species of protection to him during the fifteen years that he remained in Prussia, sacrificing him, however, to their own interests whenever circumstances arose to render the latter course advisable for their own safety.

This was what happened when Louis XVIII. was at length proclaimed king. From that moment, Prussia decided to ignore Naundorf's identity, though they still allowed him to remain amongst them.

In spite of the risk which he incurred in so doing, it is quite clear that during his stay at Spandau, Naundorf strove his hardest to establish relations between himself and his own family in France. His intense craving to be recognised as Louis XVI.'s son kept him always restless, always on the alert for a favourable opportunity of pressing his suit.

It was in March 1816 that having made the acquaintance of a young French officer in Spandau, Marassin by name, he commissioned him, on his return to France, to seek an interview with the Duchesse d'Angoulême for the purpose of convincing her of his survival.

And on a certain day in the following May, the Dauphine did consent to meet Marassin in an unfrequented part of the Park of Versailles, the Duc de Berri and M. Mouché, captain of the Guards, being also present. We do not know exactly what passed at the interview, but it is probable that Marassin only spoke to the duchess of the documents proving Louis XVII.'s identity, which Naundorf had confided to his keeping. What happened to Marassin after this meeting, beyond that he was thrown into prison, is veiled in mystery.

The keen anxiety, however, that the Dauphine subsequently displayed to attend the trial of a mock Dauphin at Rouen, suggests that she must have been at any rate partially convinced of the possibility of her brother's survival.

It is interesting to find that the Duc de Berri was present at the interview, because it is quite certain that friendly relations did exist between him and his cousin, Louis XVII.

We know as an incontestable fact that Naundorf corresponded with the duke in 1818, and received letters from

him. There is one letter extant, addressed to Naundorf at Spandau, dated September 25th, 1818.

Moreover, the Duc de Berri sent a trustworthy friend secretly to Germany, to make every possible investigation with respect to Naundorf. That the result of these inquiries was satisfactory is shown by the letter which he subsequently wrote to the latter, in which the following passage occurs: "Either you recover your rights or I lose my life."[1]

Poor young duke, alack and alas! that his undertaking was fulfilled—but by the second alternative!

The actual circumstances of the prince's assassination on February 13th, 1820, have been told so often that they need not be given here; the underlying cause of the crime, however, and the very well-founded suspicions to which it gave rise, are less generally well known.

Though Louvel, the actual murderer, was duly executed, there is very little doubt that he was a hired assassin.

"I never thought that they would really let me die," the poor wretch whispered to his confessor as he was being bound by the executioner; and the fact that 1500 francs were found at Louvel's lodgings at the time of his arrest, suggested a recent remuneration, seeing that he was only a common workman, earning 70 francs a month, and notorious for never having a penny in his pocket.

It is also noteworthy that the papers which were found on his person at the moment of his arrest, and which were seized by the police, were *not* produced at his trial, by special order of the head constable. The only questions are, Who hired Louvel, and why?

It is almost certain that he was employed by Decazes, the Minister of the Interior and the devoted creature of Louis XVIII., to whom he owed all his prosperity.

The motive for the crime is easily guessed when we learn that at that time the Duc de Berri was heart and soul in the movement on foot amongst a large proportion of the old nobility for the restoration of Louis XVII.

[1] See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. ii. p. 72.

It is so certain that Louis XVIII. and Decazes were quite aware that the life of the Duc de Berri was in danger, and that by taking the commonest precautions they could have perfectly well prevented the assassination, that the only explanation of their behaviour at this crisis is to be found in the conjecture that they secretly *countenanced* the murder, if they did not actually instigate it.

We have not space to quote M. Provins' able and convincing remarks on this point,[1] but the case of Théodor Clairnel deserves mention.

"He was a common workman," says Peuchet (keeper of the police records), "who presented himself one day at the Prefecture for the purpose of warning D'Anglès (prefect of the police) that some one had tried to hire him to assassinate the Duc de Berri. At the same time he furnished the minutest details of the plot that was then being hatched."

Having listened to his story, D'Anglès begged Clairnel to remain at the Prefecture till the next day.

"The poor fellow," added Peuchet, "suspecting no mischief, agreed to do so, whereupon he was put into a fairly well-furnished room, the windows of which were heavily barred, whilst the door was closed on him from outside and bolted."

From that day to this, Théodor Clairnel was never heard of again! D'Anglès meanwhile hastened off to Decazes, and with sundry other choice spirits held a secret conference.[2]

That Louis XVIII. and his ministers should have been in full possession of these facts, and should have taken no steps whatever to protect the life that they knew to be in such imminent danger, affords most incriminating evidence against them.

[1] "Be it noted," says M. Provins, "that in the documents relating to the court of inquiry held at Charente with reference to the Duc de Berri's death, the following passage occurred: 'The crime was committed on the eve of the day when the Government was to make some important disclosure in the Chamber. Grave suspicions attach to the first prince of the blood and also to the Cabinet at Vienna'" (*Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 6745, 36).

[2] *Mémoires tirés des archives de police par Peuchet*, vol. vi. p. 7.

"The police," writes M. Froment in his *Police devoilée de la Révolution*, were accused at the time of having favoured the execution of Louvel's crime, by neglecting the precautionary measures which were always taken when any of the royalties went to the opera. For they were certainly guilty of gross negligence on the evening of the duke's assassination.

Joly, the chief constable, was on duty that night at the Opera House, but instead of being at his post, he spent the whole evening in a café, where he was actually at the moment of the tragedy.[1]

It is therefore not surprising to find that the credit of Louvel's arrest was not due to the police, but to a private individual.

Louis XVIII.'s almost indecent behaviour on hearing of the duke's assassination gave rise to much suspicion.

The crime took place at midnight, and was instantly reported to the king, but whilst D'Artois and all the other royalties hastened to the dying prince, the king, affecting to disbelieve the rumour, ordered his gentlemen to prepare him for bed.

A little later an urgent message came from the duke, entreating his uncle to come to him. Still the king never stirred.

Obviously, he was apprehensive as to what the duke might find to say at this supreme moment ; it was wiser to wait, therefore, till he was past the power of speech.

So it was only when *Decazes himself* brought the tidings that the prince was at the point of death that his uncle consented to go to him.

When he did arrive, his unhappy nephew could neither speak nor hear. Louvel's cold steel had effectually silenced the voice which had pleaded so earnestly with Louis XVIII. on behalf of his cruelly wronged cousin.

For that the Duc de Berri died a martyr to his support of Louis XVII. the following facts leave little doubt.

[1] See Gruau de la Barre, *Appel à la Conscience Publique*, vol. i. p. 285.

Evidence is to hand that on two occasions, at any rate, the prince approached Louis XVIII. on the subject of his cousin's survival.

M. Gruau de la Barre furnishes us with the account of the first occasion, which he heard from the son of Charles X.'s goldsmith.

This latter had known a gentleman, a certain M. de X—— who had formerly served in the king's bodyguard. Several weeks before the Duc de Berri's death, M. de X—— was observed by his friends to be greatly perturbed, but on being questioned, he refused to give any explanation, saying that he was bound by an oath to keep silence.

After the revolution of July, however, when the Bourbons were driven out of France, he considered that he was absolved from keeping his promise any longer and was therefore free to speak.

Accordingly, he confided in the goldsmith as follows:—

"The day when I was so agitated I believed myself to be in the greatest peril. For having been on guard at the door of Louis XVIII.'s private room, I had overheard a very loud-voiced conversation which was being carried on by the king, Madame la Dauphine, and the Duc de Berri. The latter was talking of his cousin, Louis XVII., and entreating the king to recognise him.

"His Majesty appeared to be exceedingly angry, and forbade his nephew ever to speak on the subject again.

"Thereupon the duke replied that the king knew perfectly well that he was alive, and also the place where he had taken refuge. The Dauphine joined her entreaties to those of the prince, and there was a sound of weeping in her voice.

"I could hear quite plainly what went on, for they all spoke in such very high tones.

"Presently the duke left the room by a different door from the one where I was on duty, but a few minutes later the duchess came out and passed close to me. For a moment she paused and fixed me with her eyes. I gave myself up for lost.

"Very soon after that I was relieved of my guard, although my hour was not up, and an officer informed me that he had orders to conduct me to the Dauphine's apartments.

"I promptly threw myself at her feet and implored her mercy for myself and five children. She received me kindly, and making me sit down, she said—

"'You are a gentleman and a man of honour, and are aware that you have overheard a secret which might cost you your life. Swear that you will never reveal it, so long as our dynasty is on the throne of France.'

"I swore accordingly," added M. de X——, "but now that the dynasty is no longer on the throne, I feel that I am released from my oath."

The goldsmith often told this story to his children, two of whom are still alive.

One occupies a high position in the Church, and both are quite ready to attest these facts.[1]

This evidence was produced in the Court of Appeal in Paris by Jules Favre during the hearing of the case, February 20th, 1874.

The second occasion on which the Duc de Berri was overheard pleading the cause of Louis XVII. with his uncle was only ten days before his tragic end.

The account of that interview is given by M. Marcoux, formerly gentleman-usher in the king's chapel. He affirmed on oath that it was told him by one M. Petel, a solicitor, who was related to one of the ushers of Louis XVIII.'s cabinet.

"Shortly before the assassination of the Duc de Berri, that prince presented himself for an audience with the king.

"He was extremely agitated, and as he approached his Majesty's private apartment he said to the usher, 'I wish to be left alone.'

"Upon that, they closed the outer door, whilst the duke, passing through the inner one, pulled it to after him with such violence that it swung back and remained ajar.

[1] See *Appel à la Conscience Publique*, vol. i. pp. 119–129 (published at Breda, 1875–80).

"The prince's voice was very loud, so that he could hear distinctly all that was said.

"'I have just written a letter to my cousin,' he informed the king.

(That Naundorf received that particular letter is matter of history.)

"'What cousin?' asked the king very angrily.

"'The Duke of Normandy!'

"'He is dead!' thundered Louis XVIII.

"'No, he is not dead,' replied the prince firmly; 'see here, I have brought you his letter.'

"'If he is not actually dead,' was the retort, 'he has ceased to have any civil existence, and you will succeed to the throne after me.'

"'Sire!' cried the duke, 'I prefer fair dealing to a crown!'

"Thereupon the king, in a furious rage, ordered the duke out of his presence.

"When my relative returned home," added M. Petel, "he said to his family, 'Take my word for it, the Duc de Berri is a dead man; he's lost, lost, lost!'

"On being pressed to give his reasons for saying so, he told them what had happened, exactly as we have just stated it.

"PARIS, *May 15th*, 1851."

That quarrels did take place between Louis XVIII. and the Duc de Berri on the subject of his cousin, is fully proved by the evidence to be found in *La Légitimité*, and in many other works dealing with Louis XVII.

CHAPTER IV

Naundorf's marriage—His imperious letter to Hardenberg—Naundorf leaves Spandau for Brandenburg—Naundorf's ill-treatment at Brandenburg—Various accusations brought against Naundorf—His popularity in Spandau—Naundorf's locket—Three years' imprisonment at Brandenburg—A modern Judas—Naundorf's friendship with Baron Seckendorf—Release from prison—Fruitless pilgrimage to Silesia.

THERE is no doubt that with a view to *obliterating*—if we may use the term—Naundorf's royal origin, the Prussian Government gladly facilitated his marriage with a simple "bourgeoise."

This was the fifteen-year-old Jeanne Einert, a fatherless maiden, whom Naundorf tells us belonged to a once noble family, which had fallen on evil days.

It is curious to find that the young fiancée was kept in ignorance as to Naundorf's identity. All she knew before her marriage was that her future husband was a Frenchman by birth, and had been born at Versailles, that both his parents had perished in the Revolution, and that he had been driven by his misfortunes to seek refuge in Prussia.

One day Naundorf showed her Marie Antoinette's portrait, saying, "That is my mother, but you will never know who she really was." [1]

"Never for one single instant," says poor Naundorf towards the close of his troubled life, "have I regretted my choice of a wife." [2]

On this occasion the Prussian Government displayed the most extraordinary favouritism to Naundorf, dispensing him from complying with any of the established statutes and laws regulating the formalities connected with marriages.

The authorities did not even require the bridegroom to

[1] See *Les Infortunes du Dauphin*, p. 323.
[2] See *Ibid.*, p. 94.

produce his birth certificate, their remarkable indulgence reaching its climax when they accepted his passport as his only credential, although they were perfectly well aware that the said passport could not possibly refer to him.

Again, when on the birth of his child, Naundorf writes in a very high and mighty tone to Hardenberg, Minister of the Interior, imperiously demanding that his incognito might be dropped and that he might use his real name for his child's sake, Hardenberg suffers the letter in silence, though, as Jules Favre says, "such a letter addressed to a Prussian minister would have been enough in an ordinary way to warrant the prompt arrest of the writer."

For this remarkable document ran as follows:—

"I do not ask, much less *beg* for justice. No! I *demand* the restoration of the papers which you took from me" ("Je vous *somme* de me rendre les papiers que vous m'avez pris").

The letter concludes with an open threat:

"If you do not answer this letter, I shall appeal to the king, for truth knows no fear."

So far from punishing Naundorf for this letter—which did not secure the return of the papers—the Government only continued to protect the offender, so that when, after a residence of ten years in Spandau, Naundorf removed to Brandenburg, he was once more admitted to the privileges of citizenship in that town, on the strength of the famous passport, and this although the latter obviously referred to a man years older than himself, and one, moreover, who claimed to be a *native* of Weimar, where, as a matter of fact, the name of Naundorf was absolutely unknown!

Naundorf left Spandau in order to follow his devoted friend, Bürgermeister Dabercow, who had preceded him to Brandenburg, and whose quarrels with the Government he subsequently embraced in order, as he tells us, to retaliate upon Hardenberg for retaining his papers.

Dabercow had been formerly bürgermeister of Spandau, but his deposition from office, owing to dissensions amongst

his fellow-citizens, had led to the interference of Government, the latter supporting the townsfolk against Dabercow.

In the end, however, the deposed official was transferred to Brandenburg, where he was given an excellent appointment. Naundorf always attributed this happy ending to his own interference in the matter.

Apparently he made friends with another bürgermeister of Spandau, Kattfus by name.

Writing of him, he says, "I always think that he must have had a hint from Lecoq or one of the authorities as to my real identity. For when I was invited to a public dinner at the Palace Hotel, I was placed opposite to him at table, and he showed me the greatest attention. After dinner he embraced me cordially, saying, 'You are not in your proper place here.'

"There were tears in the old man's eyes as he clasped my hand."

When Naundorf left Spandau, Kattfus described him in his certificate as "a model citizen."

It is clear that he was much liked in Spandau, for even in 1836, when the minister Rochow—who was very ill-disposed towards Naundorf—wrote to the bürgermeister, Frochner by name, asking for particulars concerning Naundorf's stay in Spandau, the latter was forced—though with obvious reluctance—to testify to the excellent character which he had borne amongst them.

In support of this fact, Xavier Laprade relates how, when he was breakfasting at an inn in Spandau, on the occasion of his going to Prussia in order to collect evidence for Louis XVII., he had placed a painted miniature of Naundorf on the table beside him.

Catching sight of the portrait, the landlord instantly exclaimed—

"Ah! Naundorf, dear good Naundorf! why did he ever leave us? We were all so fond of him, and he was so shamefully treated at Brandenburg! The idea of accusing him of being a false-coiner! I didn't believe it at the time, and I

never shall! He was such an honourable man and so kind," added the landlord in a tear-choked voice.

To have left such a reputation behind him in a little provincial town where "every house is made of glass and every one's tongue ready *slung* for wagging" is no insignificant feather in Naundorf's cap.

And the favourable impression left by him on the good townsfolk was a lasting one, for when after his death in the August of 1845 the Dutch general, Steuerwald, made inquiries about Naundorf at Spandau, the widow of Preiss, who had been one of the church officials there, could not say enough in praise of the quondam clockmaker.

Even as recently as 1887, old men were still living in Spandau who spoke of Naundorf with the warmest affection.

One of them, Ursinus by name, declared, "I never knew his nationality. He was certainly neither Prussian nor German, but there was something very remarkable about him, he was so dignified and well-bred, and withal so irreproachable in all his dealings."

Another interesting fact connected with Louis XVII.'s intimacy with the Preiss family appeared in print as recently as 1906 for the first time.[1]

During 1822, after Naundorf had settled at Brandenburg, having occasion to return to Spandau to wind up his affairs there, he slept at Preiss' house.

Next morning, when the servant was making his bed, she found a gold locket attached to a black ribbon and containing a portrait under the pillow. She ran with it to her mistress at once, who in her turn handed it over to her husband.

Naundorf had gone out for the moment, but on his return Preiss met him with the locket, saying, "See what you have lost! Why, this is the portrait of Louis XVI.!"

Naundorf, according to M. Preiss, turned deathly white

[1] See *Revue Historique de la Question de Louis XVII.*, Mars, Avril, Mai, 1906.

and shook visibly. Then seizing his host by the arm, he pointed upwards, saying solemnly:

"As truly as there is a God in Heaven, this man was my father! But I beseech you never to say it, for it would mean certain destruction both to you and to me!"

Though Naundorf's settling-in at Brandenburg was made so easy to him, his sojourn in that city was marked by a succession of disasters, which culminated in a three years' imprisonment. The glaring injustice of this sentence and the insultingly flimsy justification suggest at once that it was only a transparent pretext for getting Louis XVII. under lock and key.

Probably had Naundorf adhered to his resolution formed in the summer of 1818, to remain in absolute obscurity for the rest of his life, he might have escaped further trouble. But unfortunately for his happiness, he broke that resolve.

His letter to Hardenberg proves that, when he expresses his intention of asserting his rights to the name of Bourbon for his child's sake.

That threat was enough to flutter the dovecot of the Prussian cabinet who, having no wish to incur the wrath of the French Government by championing Louis XVII., became suddenly, though not *directly*, merciless to him. Cost what it might, his uplifted voice must be silenced before it waxed any louder. And so as in the case of the harmless Naboth of other days, false witnesses must be hired to work his downfall.

And lo! a troop came!

At first as single spies, accusing Naundorf of petty offences, and then verily in battalions.

After a charge of not paying his debts had been preferred against him and had fallen through, Naundorf was reported to the police of having been guilty of setting the theatre on fire.

(And this was doubly cruel, seeing that on the occasion of that fire Naundorf suffered considerable loss. For under

cover of the general disturbance, the mob made their way into his shop and stole all his valuables).

Lastly, when the accusation of arson could not be proved against him, Naundorf was charged with making and circulating false coins. Being arrested, he was thrown into prison, where he was kept shut up for several months, without being brought to trial.[1]

The way in which this case was conducted against Naundorf was quite unprecedented and altogether out of order. After the Judge and all the prosecuting lawyers had given every encouragement to the obviously false witnesses to perjure themselves—which they did with great diligence and perfect impunity—the case against Naundorf finally broke down.

For he was able to establish an alibi for himself at the very hour when he was alleged to have been seen standing on the banks of the Spree, throwing a bag, "*which was probably full of false coins*," into the river.

In order to give more colour to this lying accusation, the witness swore that his face had been splashed by the water as the bag fell into the river, although from his own previous showing he was standing on the bridge at the time, which was thirty feet above the Spree.

"Surely," cries poor Naundorf, with a touch of bitter humour, "*this* witness outdid the naughty elders of old, who blasphemed the chaste Susanna's virtue!"

But although the Judge was again obliged to acquit Naundorf in the matter of the false coins, he found an ingenious reason for sending him to prison all the same.

The sentence pronounced on him ran as follows:

"Although the original charge cannot be proved against C. G. Naundorf, we find it necessary, nevertheless, to convict him as an impudent impostor, he having represented himself during the trial as being a member of the august house of

[1] Most fortunately for Naundorf, at the very moment when he was reported as having been on the river-bank, he happened to be travelling in the public diligence, with many fellow-passengers, who could confirm his statement.

Bourbon. We therefore sentence him to three years' imprisonment."

Now it is significant that the "House of Bourbon" should have been dragged in here, seeing that when driven by his tormentors to give an account of himself, Naundorf had merely stated that he was a native of Weimar and *by birth a Prince.*

The name of Bourbon had never crossed his lips.

So Naundorf was thrust back into prison and had a natural satisfaction in recording in his Memoirs, that in less than a fortnight later the "falsest of false witnesses" who had taken part against him, being, Judas-like, seized with remorse, went and hanged himself in the very town-hall where he had committed the perjury.

But who can read of these atrocious transactions without burning with indignation against those who so barbarously ill-treated an absolutely innocent man! Yet the Brandenburg prosecution was only another link in the chain forged by the Prussian politicians for the purpose of "abolishing Naundorf and discrediting Louis XVII."

As regards the shameful treatment that he received at the hands of the law at this time, Naundorf boldly refers it to the fact of his having ventured to write a second letter to Louis XVIII., which he sent under cover to the Comte d'Artois.

"Having demanded to know the names of those who accused me of setting fire to the theatre," he says, "I was told that the prosecution was undertaken by order of the Regency."

During his weary imprisonment Naundorf found some consolation in the friendship that he formed with the Governor of the gaol, Baron von Seckendorf, who, in later years, bore the highest testimony to his unimpeachable character.

The Baron, moreover, entirely believed in Louis XVII.'s identity.[1]

[1] See *Motifs et Convictions sur l'Existence du Duc de Normandie*, par MM. Gruau et Laurade, p. 31.

Writing of M. Bourbon, Seckendorf says:

"The many degradations to which he had been subjected could not obliterate the traces of his high birth. There was something unmistakably noble and dignified both in his personality and in the views that he took of life, that was quite out of the common. I am convinced that if he had been brought up to reign he would have made a very remarkable king."

In writing to Naundorf himself, the Baron says, "I hope you understand that at present I am not able to give you your rightful title, but I trust that very soon I may be able to do so. I shall rejoice with all my heart then!"

On the expiration of his imprisonment, the Baron promised to secure some employment for Naundorf in Silesia.

The difficulty, however, was to obtain enough money to pay for the removal of himself and his family.

Naturally all his resources had been exhausted long ago, and at the end of his three years' confinement he was utterly penniless.

"Happily," says Naundorf, "I remembered that a certain M. de Hagen, son of Baron Hagen the Prefect, owed me 2600 francs on a note of exchange which I had left in his hands. I hastened therefore to claim the money from him. He promised to pay it within forty-eight hours, and persuaded me to remain in Brandenburg for that time."

In an evil hour Naundorf agreed to do so, only to be instantly cited to appear before the Burgermeister, who informed him that he had received orders from the authorities to imprison him afresh if we did not set out for Silesia within the next twenty-four hours.

"So my only alternative," says the unhappy man, "was to sell the few little possessions that my poor wife had struggled to keep together to the first bidder, only keeping back some of my clockmaking implements and some bedding for the children. These few miserable wrecks represented all that remained to me of the fruits of my long years of toil."

Surely few pages in history make more pitiful reading than Naundorf's story at this crisis—only one alas! of many in his hunted life.

Was there ever a son of Adam who might more justly call himself a "man of sorrows"?

And yet, think of it! his only crime was his existence, his only offence against society was the fact of his survival.

Withered indeed must be the heart which does not ache at the picture which glides across the camera of our mental vision, at the thought of this tormented exile, turned adrift on the world, with wife and children, homeless, penniless, friendless.

In the poorly clad wayfarer carrying the wrecks of his household gods and trudging painfully along the road towards Silesia—where only disappointment awaited him—who would have dreamt that an uncrowned king was passing by? who would have associated that footsore wanderer with the whilom Dauphin of France, once the wildly adored idol of his people?

And across the storm-tossed years which separate the Naundorf of to-day from the golden age of his earliest childhood, heightening the pathos of the woeful contrast, we seem to hear the faint echo of Marie Antoinette's voice declaring with a fond mother's tender pride, that her darling "*was born happy!*"

On arriving in Silesia, Naundorf was met with the information that his promised employment had been given away to another candidate, and that there was no further opening for himself.

Sick at heart, but displaying his usual fortitude, the weary traveller turned away, and the little group directed their steps to the obscure Prussian town of Crossen.

CHAPTER V

Arrival at Crossen—Prosperity begins to dawn—"The infinite long shears of Fate"—Friendship with Pezold—Pezold embraces Louis XVII.'s cause—Pezold writes to the Dauphine—Her reply—Pezold poisoned—Suspiciously sudden death of Pezold's successor—Seizure of all Pezold's papers—Gaebel's statement with regard to Pezold—Louis XVII.'s letter to Charles X.—Naundorf warned to take flight—Leaves Crossen—Goes to Saxony—Goes to Bavaria, thence to Switzerland.

"I CANNOT recall the actual date," says Naundorf, "on which we reached Crossen, I only remember that it was on a Sunday evening after sundown that I found myself in the market-place with my wife and children, the latter crying piteously.

"We had only forty-eight francs in the whole world, and no roof over our heads for that night but the starry sky."

From the next day, however, matters began to mend.

Although Pezold—the Royal Commissioner of Justice at Crossen—had received official instructions to supervise Naundorf as a "very dangerous individual," and although his only credentials were a passport from Brandenburg describing him simply as the father of a family, together with the letter from the Spandauer Burgermeister testifying to his good conduct of some years ago, this apparent doubtful character met with no difficulty in obtaining all the rights of citizenship, the usually indispensable formalities and qualifications being again waived in his case.

This fact affords another striking proof of the favour that was so mysteriously—and apparently so capriciously—extended to the humble watchmaker by persons in high places.

Once established in his new quarters, Naundorf worked night and day to retrieve his fallen fortunes, and so successfully that he was soon prosperous enough to employ an assistant.

Scarcely, however, had he begun to enjoy the fruits of his labours when an untoward incident brought him once more within the "infinite long shears of Fate."

The Magistrates of Brandenburg instructed their colleagues of Crossen to claim a sum of more than a hundred crowns from the poor clockmaker, that sum, they declared, being still due from him in payment of the costs of the last trial.

To the honour of the good burghers of Crossen be it said, they stoutly refused to press the claim, but the incident did immense harm to Naundorf. For it gave rise to all sorts of reports that injured his reputation, and in consequence of which he lost the bulk of his customers.

Some good, however, came out of this evil, for owing to it he won the devoted friendship of M. Pezold.

One evening when Naundorf, weighed down with dejection, was toiling alone in his little workshop, the Royal Commissioner made his appearance. Being a very kind-hearted as well as a very able man, Pezold had interested himself from the first in Naundorf, and after giving much thought to his case, had come to the conclusion that the remarkable watchmaker was really a political offender. His genuine sympathy soon won Naundorf's confidence, and at the end of a few interviews the latter confided the secret of his identity to his new friend.

From that moment, 1832, to the actual day of his death, Pezold threw his whole heart and soul into Naundorf's cause, devoting nearly all his private means to his service, and making every effort in his power to establish his identity. He first of all appealed to the Prussian Government, and wrote to the public press. He went twice to Berlin to interview the authorities, who told him it was impossible to take any proceedings on behalf of Naundorf, his case being one that concerned the most powerful individuals in Europe too closely, besides the fact that his sister, the Duchess of Angoulême, being still alive, increased the difficulties of the situation.

Pezold then appealed to the most influential persons at the different German Courts, and sent letters to France, even writing direct to the Dauphine herself.

The latter's reply, written by her lady-in-waiting, Duchesse Damas, ran as follows:—

"Sir,—I received the letter that you sent to Madame the Dauphine under cover to myself, and I presented it to her. H.R.H. now commands me to say that she desires to associate herself in *no* way with the matter of which you write. I hasten to convey this information to you, and have the honour to be your very humble and obedient servant,

Duchesse de Damas."

"I like to think," said poor Naundorf sadly, referring to this letter, "that my sister was cruelly deceived about me by those around her. But later on we shall have some startling revelations to make to her."

According to Naundorf, Pezold also wrote to Charles X.

Nothing daunted by all the rebuffs that fell to his share, Pezold next attacked the Prussian Minister of Justice on July 18th, 1831, to demand the delivery of the notes of Naundorf's trial at Brandenburg "that he may expose the gross injustice with which it was conducted." "Naundorf," he writes, "is only an assumed name, which owing to adverse circumstances he is obliged to adopt. He is French by birth, and is the son of the unfortunate Louis XVI. who perished on the scaffold. Consequently he was formerly Dauphin of France and the Duke of Normandy, whom history represents as having died in the Temple under the title of Louis XVII.

"As I am acting as his agent, I placed his whole biography in M. Albrecht's hands (he was the King's Privy Councillor), begging for permission to print and publish it.

"M. Albrecht informs me with great regret that H.M. directs him to say that nothing can be done in the matter,

because my client has already been convicted by the law on two occasions. In order to convince this high functionary of my client's innocence, and also because the same objection was raised by the Ambassador of Saxony and Hesse, I now entreat your Excellency to instruct the Brandenburg authorities to supply me with the judicial notes of the clockmaker Naundorf's trial, seeing that I have undertaken to dispute the justice of his sentence."

Finding that no notice was taken of this application, Pezold wrote to the King on the subject, and following on the heels of his letter to Berlin, he managed to get himself introduced into his Majesty's private apartment, though he was not granted an audience. He was so well versed, however, in all questions of the law that he finally got the better of the Minister's opposition, and the documents for which he had fought so persistently were at last placed in his hands.

It was all in vain that certain high powers, notably Prince Garolath and his secretary, the Baron de Senden, warned Pezold of the risk he was incurring in championing his unfortunate royal protégé, reminding him in very plain language that there were several dungeons in Prussia where those who meddled with what did not concern them were liable to disappear, Pezold's zeal in the cause of justice made him deaf to all their warnings and entirely forgetful of his own personal safety. And what happened in consequence ?

On the very day that the Brandenburg papers were placed in his hands, Pezold was suddenly seized with such a violent attack of internal inflammation that for some days his life was threatened.

Thanks, however, to the skilful treatment of Dr. Hesius, Pezold rallied from this unaccountable illness and set to work again with renewed energy. Only for a brief interval, however.

One day his landlady brought him a cup of soup.

Pezold had only swallowed two mouthfuls, when starting

up, he thrust her aside, exclaiming, "My God! you have given me poison!"

From that moment Pezold lost consciousness, which he never recovered, and died March 16th, 1832. After his death, his body showed such unmistakable symptoms of poisoning that Naundorf entreated his brother, Professor Henry Pezold, to have a post-mortem.

"To what end?" asked the Professor; "it won't bring my poor brother to life again?"

In his own mind the Professor was firmly convinced that his brother had been murdered.

Immediately after Pezold's death the Government ordered seals to be placed on all his effects, whilst his successor, one Lauriscus by name, was entrusted with his official documents.

"He was a very good fellow," says Naundorf, "and promised to act for me as Pezold had done." Within four weeks, however, Lauriscus died very suddenly, whereupon all Pezold's papers were seized by the police, who emptied every drawer and cupboard in his rooms of their contents.

Thus it came to pass that all the papers which Naundorf had confided to Pezold were seized by the authorities, two valuable documents, amongst others, being secured in this way.

One was a letter written by Louis XVIII. to the Duc d'Enghien, the other was one written by the unfortunate Duc de Berri to his cousin at Crossen, only a few days before his death. There is no doubt as to the existence of this letter, it having been read by Professor H. Pezold, who gave evidence about it. It was dated January 1820.

Mesnard, the Comte de Nantouillet, and the Baron de Fontanes also bear witness to its existence.[1]

Charles Gaebel, who held the position of co-rector in Crossen, says:

"Pezold was a grand lover of justice, he was an exceed-

[1] See *Motifs et Convictions sur l'Existence du Duc de Normandie*, par MM. Gruau de la Barre et Laurade.

ingly upright man, and most philanthropic, but his numerous good actions will never be known. There is every reason to presume that his life was taken in consequence of his devotion to M. Naundorf's cause, a devotion which was on a magnificent scale, befitting the championship of a king's son, who was the target of universal maltreatment."

Poor Pezold's cruel death furnishes a very good illustration of the attitude adopted by the Prussian Government towards Naundorf.

So long as he was contented to remain in absolute obscurity, Prussia was willing to grant him protection, but the instant he raised a voice to assert his claims, she shrank from no crime to silence him.

And that Naundorf did not keep silence whilst Pezold was interesting himself so energetically on his behalf is quite certain. For in October 1829 he made a determined effort to besiege Charles X.

There is something that strikes us as pathetically childlike in the device he adopted in the hopes of touching his uncle's heart.

"Knowing that Charles X. was occupying the throne," he says, "I felt more hopeful in appealing to him. In the letter that I addressed to him, I threw myself completely on his mercy, assuring him that all my interests were centred on military matters, and that my one ambition was to increase and improve the French army.

"In order to give weight to my assurances I accompanied my letter with a little model cannon that I had made with my own hands on a new principle, and mounted on a miniature gun-carriage.

"Colonel Netter and other distinguished officers to whom I showed the little model were greatly struck by it, and declared it was a perfect *chef d'œuvre*.[1]

"I then proceeded to Berlin, where I called upon the

[1] Netter had served under Blücher, and knew Versailles and the Tuileries very well. He was much struck by the remarks that Naundorf made about these places, as he showed such an intimate knowledge of them. Later on Netter and all his family were firmly convinced of Louis XVII.'s identity.

French Ambassador, the Comte d'Agoult, and begged him to transmit both my letter and the cannon to his sovereign.

"The Count received me most affably and promised to carry out my wish. I felt convinced that the father of the Duc de Berri would certainly acknowledge me and give me his support, after he had read all the details, which I gave him in my letter.

"But I was cruelly disappointed.

"Very soon after my visit to the Count he was suddenly recalled to France, and I never heard a word either from him or from Charles X.

"Nevertheless I ascertained subsequently that both my letter and the little cannon had reached their destination.

"For a Paris newspaper, which I picked up in Berlin, contained the announcement that the little Duc de Bordeaux had received a very pretty miniature cannon from Prussia, whilst later on, when I had myself returned to France, I heard from some one who knew the royal pages, that my cannon was one of the young prince's favourite toys. The child was told that it had been sent to him from Prussia, but no doubt they took very good care to suppress the name of the donor."

After the loss of his faithful friend Pezold, Naundorf evidently became too restless to remain any longer inactive.

So within a few months of Pezold's tragic end, he wrote to Charles X., pressing him to come to Germany, that they might have an understanding with each other.

It must be remembered that Charles X. had been driven out of France in the August of 1830, and was at that time taking refuge at Holyrood whilst his kinsman, Louis duc d'Orleans, who had been raised to the throne on August 9th of the same year, was reigning as Louis-Philippe.

For three months Naundorf waited vainly for the answer which, of course, never came. No doubt it was owing to this letter that an anonymous warning reached Naundorf at this juncture which ran thus:

"His Majesty the King, acting upon the advice of his

Ministers, has issued orders for your arrest and subsequent imprisonment in a certain fortress, you should not therefore lose a single hour in making your escape."

Thereupon Naundorf promptly applied to the local authorities for a passport to Berlin, being well aware that if he asked for one for abroad it would be refused to him.

His request was readily granted, and a passport was accordingly made out in the name of Charles-Louis, native of Versailles.

Having succeeded in so far duping the police, Naundorf then set out for Berlin, but quickly changing his route, stole cautiously towards the German border, *en route* for France.

"When the Prince set out on his distant journey," says the author of the *Survivance du Roi-Martyr*, "he had four crowns in his possession, whilst his only luggage was a stick and a change of underlinen, that he carried in a canvas bag. But he was rich in hopes, those hopes which even then had lost none of the glory of their youth, for he confidently anticipated a warm welcome from his people in France.

"I am returning to my own country, and I may probably be absent for two whole years, but be of good cheer, when I do return it will be to take you back with me to our own country France, where we shall all be happy together."

So spoke Louis XVII. to his eldest daughter, Amélie, on the eve of setting out for his momentous journey.

Fearing lest his wife should be over anxious on his account, Naundorf merely told her that he was going to Saxony on business, whilst he bound Amélie to the strictest secrecy as to his real movements.

To Saxony he did go, where he made an attempt to secure an interview with the royal family, to whom he was related. All that resulted, however, from this attempt was his prompt expulsion from Dresden, accompanied by the advice from the police to "go further."

Thence Naundorf made the best of his way to the Bavarian border, meeting with many vicissitudes on the road,

which would make interesting reading if our space would permit of our relating them in detail. That he was still under observation from some quarter is evident from his experience when he reached the Bavarian border.

Having submitted his passport to the official inspector, the latter, after studying it carefully, remarked:

"Hm! Last night some grand gentlemen who were also going your way were enquiring if you had already crossed the frontier."

They proved to have been M. de Belleval, the French Ambassador, and his secretary.

Profiting by this warning, Naundorf was careful to pass the next night in a humble little inn in a small town, where, making acquaintance with a Polish officer, he agreed to share a carriage, in which he travelled safely to Nuremberg.

Finally he reached Switzerland, where he was cheated at Geneva, and persecuted till he reached Berne. Here Naundorf was arrested and imprisoned for six hours.

His offence was that of having written to the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and of having entrusted the letter to the Comte de Bombelles.

"Though I suffered much in Switzerland," said Naundorf, "the people were very good to me, especially one poor woman servant who, when I was taken ill at Berne, nursed me day and night."

CHAPTER VI

Louis XVII. arrives in Paris—Reception in Paris—Madame de Rambaud and others convinced of his identity—Story of the Dauphin's bird—Monsieur de Joly convinced of Louis XVII.'s identity—Dr. Faure's communication—Madame de Saint-Hilaire's evidence—Monsieur de Saint-Hilaire's deposition — Madame Rambaud's letter to the Duchesse d'Angoulême—Rochefoucauld's report to the Dauphine—Letter from the Dauphine—M. de Saint-Didier goes to Prague—His interview with the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

On the evening of May 26th a sorry wayfarer passed through the gates of Paris.

Travel-stained, footsore, and utterly exhausted by days without food and nights without sleep, Louis XVII. entered the brilliant capital of the kingdom which should have been his own.

By that time his evasion from Germany was not only well known to the Prussian Government, but both Louis-Philippe and the exiled Bourbons had been duly advised of it. Indeed, the Duchesse d'Angoulême had her own agent in Paris, the Vicomte de la Rochefoucauld, who kept her well posted in all that concerned her brother.

Nevertheless on his arrival in Paris no one attempted to interfere with the Duc de Normandie, as Naundorf now called himself. So for a certain time he was free to pursue those methods which he thought best for the attainment of his object, namely, his fellow-countrymen's recognition of his identity.

Oh, that they would once acknowledge him as the son of Louis XVI. !

His first care was to seek out all the friends and old servants of his early childhood, as well as those persons who had helped in his evasion from the Temple.

Unfortunately for the duke, Madame de Tourzel, the

MADAME DE RAMBAUD

once devoted governess of the royal children, died only ten days before his arrival in Paris, at the age of eighty-two, whilst her daughter Pauline, the Dauphin's former playfellow, was married and attached to the Duchesse d'Angoulême. As Madame de Bearn she had received so many favours from Louis XVIII. that she was not likely to show any great zeal in Louis XVII.'s cause.

"I came, *I was seen*, I conquered," might well have been the Duc de Normandie's motto with regard to the reception that he met with from private individuals on his arrival in Paris.

And this was the more remarkable when we remember that such was his destitution, that at the very moment when he was proclaiming himself as the son of Louis XVI., he was not only penniless, but he actually had not a rag of underlinen beneath his threadbare clothes.

Happily for him, he had made a good friend in one Mlle. Roth, a kindly woman at Berne. Firmly believing in his story, she had written to a Monsieur Albouys, who had been formerly a judge, but was living at that time at Cahors, begging him to recommend her protégé to his brother, who was residing in Paris with his wife.

And although this latter wrote to her brother-in-law at Cahors, declaring that so far as Naundorf's identity was concerned, she belonged to "the order of St. Thomas," yet the good couple received the weary traveller with ready hospitality and soon became his warmest partisans. (Later on Madame Albouys actually travelled into Prussia to carry help to the unfortunate family left behind at Crossen, who were temporarily in great poverty.)

The Comtesse de Forbin-Janson, a former lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette, was amongst the first to recognise the Duc de Normandie as Louis XVI.'s son, whilst on the following day Madame de Rambaud was also entirely convinced of his identity.

The latter having had the charge of the Dauphin from the time of his birth till the moment of his imprisonment

in the Temple, had always declared that she should know the prince anywhere by certain marks on his body, notably, in addition to those which have been already mentioned, the scar left on his lip by the bite of a favourite rabbit and the curious wrinkles in his neck.

(All these marks, as we know, were present on Naundorf's person.)

In her first interview with the "Pretender," Madame de Rambaud deliberately set what is commonly called a "booby-trap" for him. She showed him a little frock which she had always kept as a memento of the Dauphin, saying, "You wore this frock at Versailles."

"Oh no, Madame," broke in the prince, "I never wore that at Versailles, but I remember putting it on at the Tuileries, because the sleeve hurt me so much under the arm that I only wore it once."

Thereupon Madame de Rambaud fell at his feet.

The prince's memory outdid her own, for until he recalled it to her, she had quite forgotten the detail of the tight sleeve. A deposition recording this incident was produced by Jules Favre at the Court of Appeal in 1874, written in Madame de Rambaud's own hand.

Amongst many other depositions addressed to M. Favre in 1874, the following one contains an interesting anecdote.

It is contributed by M. Choulet, ex-mayor of Blidot.

"JOINVILLE, *February 24th*, 1874.

"MONSIEUR FAVRE,—The lawsuit upon which you are now engaged with respect to the claims of the Naundorf family, recalls an incident to my memory which may possibly interest you.

"On the occasion of one of my journeys to Metz between 1840–42, I fell in with a certain M. Azeronde, a merchant of Amiens, who told me that happening to be in Paris during the time that the Duc de Normandie was there seeking to establish his identity, he—M. Azeronde—was one evening at a social gathering where the conversation

turned upon Naundorf and his claims. One of the gentlemen of the party remarked in the course of the evening that he should greatly like to meet Naundorf, because he should like to test his good faith by proving whether he could remember a certain incident connected with his childhood.

"'I should like to remind him of this passage in his early life,' said the gentleman, whose name I could not catch, 'because I should soon see if I were dealing with an impostor or not.'"[1]

Accordingly steps were taken to arrange a meeting between this person and Naundorf at a friend's house, where several other people were present. In due time M. —— proceeded to relate the following anecdote in the prince's presence.

"'When I was quite a little boy,' he said, 'living with my father, who was a well-known confectioner in the Rue de Rivoli, a tame bird flew into our house, which we soon secured and shut up in a cage.

"'A little later some one recognised the bird as belonging to the Dauphin. Thereupon I was despatched with a servant to carry the cage back to the Tuileries. On arriving at the Palace, we showed the bird and explained our errand.

"'The officer on duty ordered it to be taken to the prince, and gave directions for a louis to be bestowed upon me.

"'At that moment a gentleman who was descending the grand staircase recognised me, and learning what brought me to the Palace, he exclaimed, "That child doesn't want any money, he would far rather be allowed to see the Dauphin by way of reward."

"'Accordingly I was taken upstairs to a room where the prince was doing his lessons. He received me very graciously, but seeing a large map spread open on the table, I remember that I could not resist the temptation of putting my finger on it, exclaiming, "Why, here's Paris."'

[1] See *La Question Louis XVII.*, p. 171.

"When the speaker arrived at this point in his story, the Duc de Normandie suddenly interrupted him.

"'Stop, Monsieur,' he cried, 'now let me tell the rest of the tale, for I perfectly recollect your putting your finger on the map, and how I exclaimed, "Oh! you mustn't touch a map like that."

"'Then seeing that I had distressed you, I took you by the arm and led you into my little garden, where we played together for a short time.'"

"M. Azeronde," continues the writer of the letter, "who repeated this incident to me, was fully satisfied that Naundorf and Louis XVII. were identical, and was quite persuaded that Naundorf was not an impostor.

"I did not meet M. Azeronde again after 1842 or 1843, and I never knew the name of the confectioner's son of the Rue de Rivoli, but I have not the slightest doubt that your clients could discover all about him if they thought that it was worth while to make enquiries.

"Many others besides myself must be in possession of these facts. I am, Monsieur, yours faithfully,

"CHOULET, former Mayor of Blidot."

Another deposition quoted by M. Favre on the same occasion was that of M. de Joly, who was the last Minister of Justice before the Revolution.

When on August 10th the royal family were dragged to the Hall of the Assembly and detained there for two days, M. de Joly accompanied them, and remained with them during those terrible hours.

He was one of the first persons whom the duke sought out on his arrival in Paris, but the old man being very sceptical about his identity, was determined to test his veracity as far as possible. He accordingly set traps for him, by giving him a wrong description of the windows in the room where the royal family were confined.

But the duke at once contradicted him, setting him right on that point, and when M. Joly asked him if he

remembered how he kept running about the room, the duke answered:

"No, Monsieur, I had to keep quite still, part of the time I sat on your knees, and then I went to sleep on my mother's lap."

This was quite correct.

"You remember eating a piece of bread?" asked M. de Joly.

"I don't recollect the bread," was the answer, "but I remember that I was very hungry and some one brought me some soup."

This also was accurate.

And so the cross-examination continued for a little longer, the extraordinary accuracy with which the prince recalled certain small details to M. de Joly's memory which he had himself forgotten, finally convincing the old statesman beyond all doubt that he was really speaking to the son of Louis XVI.

At the close of that single interview, M. de Joly solemnly declared "nothing in the whole world will ever shake my conviction as to his identity, for all that he told me was absolutely accurate and *could have been known to no one but the Dauphin and myself.*"

From this conviction he never swerved to the day of his death.

"Nevertheless," says M. Otto Friedrichs in his article 'Une Poignée de Temoinages inédits' (a handful of hitherto unpublished proofs)[1] "after De Joly's death, several members of his family from self-interested motives have considered it politic to dispute this evidence or rather its authenticity."

Unfortunately for them, however, it is far too well established to be refuted. . . . By way of making an addition to the evidence that has been already adduced, I will extract the following passage from a letter, the original of which I have before me.

[1] See *La Question de Louis XVII.*, pp. 170–175.

It was written to M. Gruau de la Barre by a lawyer, M. Bérard de Pontlieue, and bears date April 29th, 1873.

"I was also acquainted in Paris with M. de Joly, Louis XVI.'s last Minister of Justice, who assured me, only a few days before his death, that he had been convinced of the prince's identity by the latter's knowledge of what had passed between himself and M. de Joly on the day which was spent by the royal family at the National Assembly.

"For it would have been absolutely impossible for any one but himself and the prince to have been acquainted with certain insignificant details connected with that occasion."

M. de Joly's testimony may therefore be considered entirely "without repentance." Moreover be it remarked that whenever any members of the house of Joly are reminded of the former Minister's recognition of Louis XVII.'s identity, they instantly become most obviously embarrassed and constrained.

All the same, at the risk of increasing their annoyance on this point, my duty as an historian compels me to quote another passage from yet another letter which has been hitherto unpublished.

This, bearing date June 15th, 1837, is from the pen of Dr. Faure, the celebrated oculist, who attended the Duchesse de Berri and who wrote to Naundorf as follows:

"M. Joly is dead, but I think that you should know that he was in possession of a large collection of notes which closely concerned yourself, and nearly all of which I have read.

"You would do well to apply to his widow for them."

It is noteworthy that neither Naundorf nor any of his descendants were ever allowed to set eyes on those valuable papers which had been so carefully collected by Louis XVI.'s last Minister of Justice.

M. de Joly left three sons, one of whom, Alfred de Joly, was a general. This officer had one Pierlet, a soldier, as his secretary, and to Pierlet he freely admitted that his

father had been absolutely convinced of Louis XVII.'s identity.

Louis XVII. soon found himself surrounded by quite a galaxy of supporters, many of whom had been attached to the royal household.

(During the years intervening between 1833 and 1840, no less than twenty servants who had been in the service of Louis XVI., and were therefore well qualified to give evidence on the question of the dauphin's identity, gave sworn evidence on this point, either verbally or in writing.)

Amongst his earliest supporters during the beginning of Naundorf's sojourn in Paris were M. and Madame de Saint-Hilaire.

Madame de Saint-Hilaire had been lady-in-waiting to Madame Victoire, Louis XVI.'s aunt, and writing to M. Gruau de la Barre, the prince's counsel, she says:

"When the news of the dauphin's death was circulated in Paris, I was greatly surprised, as we had scarcely heard that he was ill.

"One of my friends, however, whose name has escaped me, assured me under the seal of secrecy that it was a false report, and that she knew for a certainty that he had been taken out of the Temple. Ever since that I have always believed in the prince's survival, and I have moreover felt convinced that all the double dealing connected with him had but one object, namely, to despoil him of any proof which he might possess which could help to establish his identity. I constantly heard of false dauphins appearing in Paris, but I never felt the slightest interest in them, being sure that the real son of Louis XVI. would make it his first care to seek out all those who had known his parents, and who could remember him as a child.

"Consequently my interest was enlisted at once, when, on August 14th, 1833, M. Geoffroys—an inhabitant of Niort—came to tell me that an individual was in Paris at that moment who claimed to be the son of Louis XVI., and who

was making inquiries in every direction for all persons who had in any way been connected with his family. He was specially anxious to find Pauline de Tourzel, now Madame de Béarn.

"Not wanting exactly to put myself forward in this matter, I wrote a letter to Madame de Rambaud, suggesting that she should accompany M. Geoffroy to interview this person, as she would be better able than any one to form an opinion about him, seeing that she had never left him for a single day from the time of his birth till his imprisonment after that fatal tenth of August.

"Madame de Rambaud recognised him at once, and having mentioned our name to the prince, she brought him to our house, a few days later, assuring us that there could not be the slightest doubt as to his identity. She preceded him into my room, and told me it was impossible not to recognise him as a Bourbon.

"And indeed both my husband and myself—in spite of our visitor's extreme shyness and difficulty in speaking French—were so struck by his likeness to his parents, especially to his father, that we seemed to have Louis XVI. before us. Later on, when the prince had gained more assurance and felt at ease with his friends, all his nervousness disappeared, and his manners became singularly like his father's.

"It was moreover quite easy to trace a likeness in his build to the child whom I had so frequently watched at play on the terraces, just in front of Madame Victoire's windows.

"I begged the prince to make use of our house until he found a better one, and during our many private conversations he recalled a number of small incidents connected with his family in his childhood, which I know to be true. He also minutely described the arrangement of his mother's rooms, the position of the furniture, the shape and appearance of the different musical instruments that the queen used to play, in short, he mentioned a score of minor details which no one outside the royal circle could possibly

have known or have had any opportunity of knowing after the October of 1792.

"After much reflection I have no longer the slightest doubt as to the identity of the Duc de Normandie, and this being so, I considered it my duty to write to the dauphine and acquaint her with the joyful intelligence that her brother was found.

"Our family was so well known to Charles X. that we should not have ventured to take this step had I not felt assured that he would never suspect us of being involved in any kind of intrigue.

"(Signed) F. MARCO DE SAINT-HILAIRE.

"VERSAILLES, *July 10th*, 1836."

Under date of December 17th, 1834, the Comte de Saint-Hilaire, ex-gentleman usher to Louis XVI., also made a solemn declaration "before God and men" that Charles-Louis, Duc de Normandie, son of Louis XVI. and of Marie-Antoinette, is still alive, and that during the past sixteen months in which I have frequently seen him, I have become absolutely convinced of his identity as Louis XVII.

After declaring that he possesses all the family traits, as well as manners, habits and tastes of his father, the count adds that amongst the recollections of his childhood, the duke remembers certain buildings in the park at Versailles, which having been done away with after the king's death, had never been seen by any one under forty years of age.

Meanwhile Madame de Rambaud also wrote to the dauphine in September 1833.

"MADAME,—One who would gladly have given her life for your noble parents, ventures to approach you with the news of the survival of your august brother. I have seen and identified him with my own eyes, and now, after having spent many hours in his society, I am absolutely convinced that he is the son of Louis XVI. That his life should have

been so miraculously preserved is a signal mark of God's goodness, and whilst I kneel to Him in thankfulness, I feel certain that He must have saved him for the special purpose of making him the peace-bringer to our distressed nation. This conviction fills me with hope. . . .

"As for the prince, his long drawn out misfortunes, his wonderful resignation to the will of God, and his genuine saintliness are beyond all description.

"Trusting that your Royal Highness will assure me that I have not been too bold in opening my heart to the sovereigns who are so deservedly beloved by all loyal subjects, I subscribe myself with the greatest respect, Your very humble and obedient servant,

VEUVE RAMBAUD."

"P.S.—Madame remembers that I had the honour to be attached to the cradle of her august brother from the day of his birth until August 10th, 1792."

This letter was closely followed by another, stating that the peculiar marks which had been present on the body of the little dauphin at his birth were to be found on the Duc de Normandie's person.

In spite of the Duchesse d'Angoulême's openly expressed disinclination to receive any tidings of her brother, she was apparently besieged by letters respecting him.

M. de la Rochefoucauld, who was her own agent, employed by her to keep a close watch upon the prince, sent a long and detailed account of the "Pretender" to her—November 16th, 1833—in which he practically pleads the Duc de Normandie's cause with considerable eloquence.

"It is impossible to deny that he is extremely like the Bourbon family. . . . I cannot give you an idea of the impression I received whilst hearing him speak so naturally of his family, of his sister the Duchesse d'Angoulême, of the Duc de Berri—*who he told me had lost his life in his cause*, &c.

"My head literally whirled, and I was greatly touched,

and yet his manner was perfectly simple, and his language quite moderate. There was *nothing* that could suggest fraud or imposture in any way. If he is really the victim of an hallucination, if he is really under the influence of an *idée fixe*, the method in his madness is quite extraordinary. When I assured him that, though I would read his papers setting forth his various vicissitudes, he must remember that I should require actual proofs of his identity before I could believe in it, he answered quite quietly:

"I promise you that the proofs will not be lacking. I can supply them."

M. de la Rochefoucauld then proceeded to discuss the advisability of granting an interview to *cet homme*. Evidently he is inclined to encourage the dauphine to see him; but he is too cautious to *urge* her to do so, and closes the subject by saying:

"But it is for your Royal Highness's own heart and judgment and wisdom to decide the question. . . . It has been suggested to me that I should approach your Royal Highness in person and lay his papers before you, but as such a step on my part would appear to give too much importance to the matter, I shall remain quietly here."

In answer to the many letters which the dauphine received from various persons urging her to grant an audience to the prince, she writes:

"MADAME,—I am too thoroughly convinced of my brother's death to be able to recognise him in the person of whom you write. The proofs he furnishes do not satisfy me, and I have no recollection of the facts which he recalls.

"Consequently I cannot consent to interview him. The threats which he dares to utter do not impress me in the very least. If he has other and more convincing proofs to give me, let him do so.

"(Signed) MARIE-THÉRÈSE."

This letter was probably addressed to Madame de Rambaud; at any rate the latter took prompt measures for supplying the dauphine with the further proofs that she required. For she forthwith besought M. de St.-Didier, a former faithful servant of Louis XVI., to set out for Prague, laden with all the evidence to hand of the prince's identity.

Perhaps of all the duke's friends and supporters at that time, M. de St.-Didier appears the boldest and the most persistent.

It was in December 1833 that he started for Prague, well furnished with evidence to support the Duc de Normandie's claim.

On January 17th he was received by the Duchesse, the Marquis de Vibraye being present.

Her first words, however, revealed her regret at having declared that she was ready to receive further proofs of her brother's survival.

"Ah! M. de St.-Didier," she began, "so you have come for the promised interview, but I have already despatched a decided refusal to grant you an audience."

And when St.-Didier protested against this announcement, she merely replied, "What am I to do? My formal refusal is actually despatched, and I cannot go back on it."

A minute later she added, "Of course every one must know how happy I should be if I could really find my brother, but unfortunately I *know* that he is dead, I could even say that, so to speak, he died before my eyes. At least I know that the child who occupied the rooms in the Tower underneath mine did certainly die.

"*So that unless another child was substituted for my brother without my knowledge, he must be dead.*"

"This speech," says St.-Didier, "was almost tantamount to an involuntary admission of the real state of the case."

Clearly the unhappy duchess did not possess her uncle's impudent effrontery, nor was she skilled in the art of lying.

This was still more apparent when St.-Didier proceeded to say that the prince was willing to abdicate his right to

the throne in favour of the Duc de Bordeaux—no one but himself having the power to dispose of the throne of France.

For then, instead of receiving this statement with quiet scorn or a burst of ironical laughter, Madame only answered:

"He's right in doing so, only, M. de St.-Didier, you must remember that he is married, and *what about his own children?*"

In asking this question the dauphine gave herself away by betraying how much she feared the consequences of an open acknowledgment of her brother's identity.

Presently she brought the interview to a close by saying:

"But all this is far too important to be hastily settled. I must think it over for some days and discuss it with the king and the duke, for I can do nothing without their consent."

By way of helping her to arrive at some decision, De St.-Didier left her a long and very detailed note, beginning:

"MADAME,—Fearing to trespass on your great kindness in receiving me in audience, I refrained from mentioning one of the most important items which I was charged to communicate to your Royal Highness. My sense of duty impels me to enlarge upon it here.

"The 'Pretender' maintains that he is well known to several European monarchs, notably to the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria, that the proofs of his identity are in the hands of the Prussian Ministry, and that amongst those proofs are two most valuable documents. One is signed and sealed by Louis XVI.'s own hand, the other is in the Queen's writing, and describes the peculiar physical marks by which his identity with the Dauphin can be established.

"He adds that the whole account of his misfortunes, written in German, is also in the possession of the King of Prussia, consequently, if the royal family will apply to that monarch, they can obtain all the evidence necessary to verify his assertions."

The writer then proceeds to give the whole story of Naundorf's cruel treatment at the hands of the Prussian Government, emphasising their stubborn refusal to return his precious papers to him. He then reiterates his entreaties that the dauphine would consent to interview the prince.

Finally this lengthy document concludes as follows: "My royal client's last words to me will remain engraven on my memory, so solemnly were they spoken and so earnestly.

"Go, Monsieur, go," he cried, "and may God be with you. Tell my sister that she holds in her hands the destiny of France and that of our family. Tell her too *that I know everything.* Say to her that directly my identity is publicly acknowledged, Henry V. will become King of France by my desire. But tell her that if, on the contrary, she refuses to acknowledge me, there will be no more Bourbons in France and no throne for the Duc de Bordeaux.

"Tell her, what she knows already, that I was not baptized Louis-Charles, but Charles-Louis, and that if I succeed to the throne unacknowledged by her or my relations, I shall reign as Louis XVII. It depends, however, upon her and her family whether I call myself Charles XI.

"She will understand what I mean by that.

"Now, Monsieur, embrace me and go.

"Written at PRAGUE, *January 17th*, 1834."

After taking several days to read and digest M. de St.-Didier's letter, the dauphine summoned him to another interview. Her face was stern and set, however, and her voice and manner icily cold.

"After having read all the evidence which you placed in my hands," she said, "I can find nothing to induce me to grant the interview for which you ask. If anything *could* impress me, it would be Madame de Rambaud's letter, because I do remember that she was woman of the bed-chamber to my brother. *But all that goes for nothing.* Tell the person to put in writing all that he wishes to say to me,

viva voce, and, having duly signed and sealed it, let him despatch it by a trusty bearer.

"I will then take his request for an interview into consideration. But impress upon him that he must give me all the details of his evasion from the Temple, for these are what I specially insist on hearing."

CHAPTER VII

Louis XVII.'s letters to the Duchesse d'Angoulême

BEFORE going any further it may be well to place some of Louis XVII.'s appealing letters to the Duchesse d'Angoulême before our readers.

The following is apparently one of the first—if not actually *the* first—written by her unhappy brother from Spandau, March 2nd, 1816.

To MADAME LA DUCHESSE D'ANGOULÊME, À PARIS

"MY WELL-BELOVED SISTER,—Forgive me, if dispensing with all etiquette, I write these words to you out of the fullness of my heart. For I am really still in existence, I, your own brother, who has never forgotten you.

"Ask for any proof you like, I can undertake to give any. I only make one condition, namely, that you will let me come to you, quite privately and secretly, for I have no wish to disturb the peace of the country of which it has been robbed too long.

"Don't doubt the fact of my existence any longer. Did we not both suffer alike and at the same time in the Temple? To convince you of this, need I remind you of the day when I was so happy to see you again, after we had been so cruelly separated from our good Aunt? Surely you remember that day, and how you were dragged before the magistrates, and how no one but your own brother can tell you the exact spot where we met afterwards. No! there is no one else who can repeat to you the horrible cross-examination to which those monsters dared to subject you, and which they had also imposed on my saintly aunt.

"These facts alone ought to be enough to open your

eyes to the truth and to justify the appeal I make to you. And yet there are many more confidential communications I could make if I dared commit them to paper.

"If you are afraid to act on your own initiative, you could refer to the King, our Uncle, Louis XVIII., to whom I am writing all this, and am sending my letter to him by a special messenger. You need not tell him that I have also written to you.

"From my earliest infancy I have always known as I know now that I am the only rightful successor to my father, and I also know that whereas as a little child I was always called Charles-Louis, Duc de Normandie, I always knew that one day I should be called Louis XVII., just as my father was called Louis XVI.

"And yet now that my father is dead, people not only refuse to call me by his name, but they object to my bearing my own name. And it is from my own family that these objections come.

"And so it is from the law-courts of my own country, where we all meet on equal ground, it is before the tribunals of France that I shall seek redress and the recovery of my right to bear my own name, though possibly that name may prove to be my only inheritance.

"(Signed) CHARLES-LOUIS, Duc de Normandie." [1]

A year later Naundorf writes again to the dauphine.

[1] The Duke of Normandy had been christened Charles-Louis, but after the death of the elder dauphin, the king changed the order of the younger boy's names to Louis-Charles.

Subsequently this name always appeared in all the contemporary records.

Hence the false dauphins, Hervagault, Mathurin Bruneau, and Richemont, were all most careful to call themselves Louis-Charles.

This gave rise to a rather amusing incident during the trial of the last impostor in 1834.

When M. de St.-Didier rose in court to read a letter from the real Louis XVII., signed Charles-Louis, the impostor in the dock sprang to his feet and loudly jeered him for this supposed lapsus.

Thus he effectually gave himself away, since no one but the real dauphin would have taken the name of Charles-Louis, by which of course he perfectly well remembered being called in his earliest childhood.

See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. ii. p. 89.

"SPANDAU, *March 11th*, 1817.

"Until now I have received no answer to the letters that I have sent both to you and the King.

"My heart makes every excuse for *you*, but as regards Louis XVIII. it is quite a different matter. In order to convince you of the bad faith of this uncle of mine, I beg you to refer to a certain M. Lebas, who was the chargé d'affaires of the woman who adopted me after my escape from the Temple.

"At that time I know positively that he was sent to the Comte de Provence to tell him all about me.

"The Count flatly refused to see him.

"My adopted mother was the widow of a man who lost his life in our cause at the hands of the Republicans. I don't know the dear woman's real name, I only know that her second husband was Swiss, and that through him she became acquainted with Lebas, and that both the families were then living at Geneva. You have received my letters. If you are not amongst those who conspire so cruelly against me, you have now every facility for communicating with M. Lebas at Geneva.

"To make matters easier you have only to apply to the sister of Robespierre, who is still alive, and is acquainted with all M. Lebas' family, and is also very intimate with the lady whom I have mentioned as my adopted mother.

"But if you wish to be saved the trouble of making any inquiries, you have only to send for me secretly ; one line of your handwriting will suffice, I can arrange all the rest.

"Pray believe that my existence is a fact, and do have the moral courage to get the better of your hallucinations on that point, otherwise they will become criminal.

"Had I really died in the Temple, my tormentors would have taken good care to show you my dead body, in order to dispel all your doubts on that point. But I ask you now, *did* any one ever show you a corpse and tell you it was mine ?

"Give your conscientious consideration to that argument,

and then I am convinced you will no longer resist the advances of an unhappy brother, who throughout all, loves you tenderly.

"C.-L., Duc de Normandie."

Fearing that his last letter had not reached the dauphine, Naundorf sends another under cover to the Duc de Berri, dated September 28th, 1818. The letter to his cousin runs as follows:—

"MONSIEUR,—All the efforts that I have hitherto made to reunite myself with my sister having been unsuccessful, I now approach you, only asking for the common justice to which I am entitled, namely, a hearing from the King.

"I have no intention of disturbing him in the enjoyment of the unlawful position he now occupies, and which is mine by right of succession to my father. But I do demand that the unfortunate son of Louis XVI. should no longer remain amongst his fellow-creatures as a pariah, who can claim neither name nor parentage.

"I think it right to inform you that I have decided to marry a humble bourgeoise.

"And now if there is a spark of honour still left amongst the Bourbons in France, you will not leave this letter unanswered. If you really have any doubts as to my identity, you have only to refer to the sister of the infamous Robespierre,[1] for no one is better able to supply you with all necessary information.

"If, however, you belong to the number of my enemies and are only determined to ignore my true origin, I must leave your punishment in God's hands, who will certainly chasten both you and your children.

"LOUIS-CHARLES.

"SPANDAU, *September 1st*, 1818."

("What a strangely apt prediction is contained in that last sentence," cries M. Provins.)

[1] She was actually in receipt of a life pension at that time from Louis XVIII.

The letter to the duchess begins :—

"MADAME,—You cannot guess how painful it is to me to be forced to compel your attention by reviving the memories of our childhood. Nevertheless, Madame, as you refuse to answer my letter, you must forgive me for alluding to the circumstances connected with that time when I *was* dear to you, even though they may evoke unpleasant recollections. For the details that I shall recall to you *must* convince you that I am really your brother.

"Madame, without going back to my earliest childhood, about which I have written to you so often already, I will recall the night when you and Madame de Tourzel led me by the hand as we stole away secretly from the Tuileries. You will remember that I had not been told beforehand of this intended flight, that is why I always remember how I was put to bed as usual that evening, and how after I had fallen asleep I was awoken by our mother in order to make ready for the journey. You will remember that it was our mother and Madame de Tourzel who dressed me . . . and how strictly they forbade us both not to utter a single word to any one as we left the Palace, whilst I was specially charged not to make the slightest sound.

"It was therefore in complete silence that we reached a certain place, the name of which I have forgotten, but I remember perfectly that we were to wait there in the dark till we were joined by our parents and our aunt.

"I remember, too, that our father excused himself to Madame de Tourzel for having kept us waiting, because he had lost his way in the dark. If this is not enough to convince you of my identity, let me remind you of that miserable day when we were taken for the first time into that huge building where our whole family with Princesse de Lamballe and Madame de Tourzel were shut up inside a barred room, and where, worn out with fatigue, I fell asleep on my mother's lap, and only awoke, so far as I can

remember, on the following day, when they conveyed us to that dreadful prison.[1]

"Should you still hesitate to believe that I am your brother, I will tell you the names of the persons who accompanied us to that great building and whom I shall never forget. They were the Prince de Poix, the Vicomte de Saint Priest, and M. de Jarjaye.

"I can remember still more vividly the day when we were taken to the Temple, and how our parents and our aunt, and the Princesse de Lamballe and Madame de Tourzel and Mlle. Pauline were all packed into the same carriage with ourselves and driven to our new prison.

"Surely you remember, Madame, how I sat on my mother's knees the whole way, because there was no room for me elsewhere. You will remember how Madame Bazin and MM. Chamilly and Hue followed us to the little Tower. I have already written to you about the faithful Clery and mentioned various little details which can only be known by you. You will perhaps, Madame, remember what the Duchess S—— managed to give to our aunt, when we were lodged in the Great Tower, and how she hid it in the *great hat* that she had in her room.

"But if all these reminiscences are not enough to convince you of my identity, the description which I will now give you of our rooms in the Tower ought at any rate to carry conviction with it. On entering our mother's room, her bed was placed against the wooden partition on the left hand, whereas on going into my aunt's room her bed was placed on the opposite side, being against the same partition on the right hand.

"The window in our aunt's apartment was exactly opposite the door and looked into the Temple gardens. I remember that in order to reach her room we had to go through the one which was occupied by Tison. You will remember the latter. I shall never forget the frenzied con-

[1] Here the dauphin refers to the night which the royal family spent in the cells of the building where the Feuilletants had established their club.

dition of that wicked man's wife. I have told you all this to vindicate myself.

"And whilst I pray that my persecutors may never experience my sufferings, I forgive them.

"C.-L., Duc de Normandie.

"SPANDAU, *September 25th*, 1818."

"Surely," remarks M. Provins, "it would have been absolutely impossible for a humble clockmaker in an obscure country town in Prussia to learn all these unimportant details so accurately."

This letter was left unanswered like its predecessors.

In 1833 Naundorf again writes to his sister :—

"All the letters that I have written to you since 1816 have surely proved to you that my affection for you has never wavered. And even now I like to persuade myself that you have not received them, and that you are cruelly deceived by those around you, who are doing all in their power to prevent us from meeting. So once more I write to you and place the happiness of us both and the welfare of our family and the fate of the country at your disposal. Let me remind you of the words spoken by our beloved mother after my father's life had been sacrificed. I have never forgotten them, as I proved in the letter that I sent to you when you were at Holyrood in 1832.

"Now I will recall a scene which took place during our imprisonment in the Temple, and *in which you were the only person concerned. No one but you and I can possibly know what I mean to convey by those words.* And if you still disbelieve that I was your companion in suffering in the Temple, ask me to tell you the name of that friend whom the Queen sent to the Comte de Provence with the ring and the seal.

"Is it necessary to describe that seal to you? Look on the third facet and you will see the portrait of your brother.

"Let me also remind you of the faithful M. Toulon, and if you still refuse to believe in me, then I will invoke that

saint, whose initial is inside the ring, as a witness against you at the judgment seat of God.

"Is it possible that you still believe that I am an impostor?

"Well, now I will mention yet another detail.

"One day our dear aunt hid the only possession remaining to us, so that the gaolers never found it, though they sought high and low for it. Surely you remember all the circumstances of *that* incident?

"And now if you still persist in retaining your doubts as to my identity, the last and only effectual way of dispelling them will be to allow me an interview.

"I have strong reasons for not wishing to meet you at any spot either in Prussia or Austria. I would therefore suggest Dresden as our rendezvous, but choose what place you will, so long as it is not in either of the above-mentioned countries. I shall be always ready to come to you. When we have once met, you will never doubt again that I am your brother, who, in spite of all that I have gone through, can never forget the sacred tie of blood that binds us together.

"In the name of that blood, in the name of our holy faith, and by all that is hallowed in the sight of God and man, I conjure you not to treat lightly the oath that I now swear before God Almighty, that I am verily and indeed your brother.

"If, however, my relations persist in refusing to recognise me, the consequence that will ensue must be on their own heads.

"My plans are all made.

"I am determined to recover the use of my name and of my family rights, and if my relations reject me, I shall only have the greater need to vindicate my honour, for I *will* not pass in the eyes of the world for one of those vile impostors who succeed each other periodically.

"In short, I have the blood of kings in my veins, and all the world shall know that it has remained pure and unsullied.

Every one shall know that I am the worthy son of my unhappy father, and of my excellent and most unfortunate mother.

"(Signed) C.-L., Duc de Normandie."

On February 13th, 1834, the prince wrote another letter—an unusually long one—in reply to his sister's message that he was to give her all the details of his evasion from the Temple.

He began by saying that if she applied to the Prussian Minister, Hardenberg, for the papers which he persisted in withholding from him, she would there find all the information she required, adding that he considered that he had been shamefully treated by the King of Prussia and his Cabinet with regard to those documents of which they had so unlawfully possessed themselves.

He then alludes to the terrible evening when he was torn from his mother's arms and handed over to Simon's custody, and describes his sufferings when left to the tender mercies of the municipals. He mentions Barras' visit, saying that he was accompanied by a man, who became his keeper, Laurent, of course, and who eventually conveyed him out of his prison on the second floor of the Tower.

Then come the details of his evasion, which are given as coherently as possible, considering that he was heavily drugged for most of the time. Necessarily on various points of the transaction his recollections are vague.

Finally, after referring to all the appeals he had made so vainly to Louis XVIII., the prince concludes his letter as follows:—

"There is one accusation which is brought against me, Madame, and which I must repudiate, specially as I am informed that it has been repeated to you. Namely, that I married a woman who belonged to the very dregs of society.

"Never was there a fouler slander!"

Here follow particulars as to the Duchesse de Normandie's family.

"And now, Madame," he winds up, "I consider that all the details contained in this letter should induce you at last to grant the favour for which I have prayed so long with clasped hands. If you persist in refusing to see me, I shall then steadily pursue the course that I have mapped out for myself. But it would be sweet indeed, Madame, if your heart prompted you to accept the truth, instead of waiting till it is forced upon you by the verdict of the law.

"If you consider that your line of action is the right one, there is nothing more to be said. God must judge between you and me.

"I am, Madame, your unfortunate but worthy brother.

"C.-L., Duc de Normandie.

"PARIS, *February 13th*, 1834."

Two other letters were written by the duke to comply with the suggestion made by the duchess, that her brother should select two trusty friends who would take charge of all the written evidence he could possibly collect for his identification, and who should transmit it direct to herself.

Only too glad to act on this suggestion, the duke set to work for the hundredth time to draw up his points of evidence, laboriously entering into every possible detail, and leaving nothing that might serve as a proof unsaid.

His own friends were to be accompanied by two friends of the exiled family, and it was formally agreed that the prince's letters should be opened and read in the dauphine's presence before this little committee of four persons.

The two friends on Madame's side were to be M. de la Rochefoucauld and one De Pastoret.

But as soon as it became evident that the duke was doing all in his power to make the most of this opportunity for asserting his rights, and that there was moreover every probability that he would really succeed in proving his case, both De la Rochefoucauld and De Pastoret declined to fulfil the engagement, and literally "cried off."

Could any behaviour have been more unworthy?

CHAPTER VIII

Attempted assassination of the Duke of Normandy—Anonymous gift of poisonous sweetmeats—Madame de Rambaud goes to Prague—M. de St.-Didier's second interview with the Dauphine—Her emphatic refusal to see Louis XVII.—Deathbed declaration left by Louis XVIII. —Audience refused to Madame de Rambaud—She is commanded to leave Prague—The little blue coat—The Naundorf family at Dresden—The Baronne de Génerès—No longer Naundorfs but De Bourbons—The Duchesse d'Angoulême arrives in Dresden—Secret summons to Madame Rambaud—The King of Saxony's dinner at the Castle of Pilnitz—"Cousins indeed!"—The Duchesse refuses to see Baronne Génerès—Mysterious gift to Madame Rambaud—The Duchesse's secret distress.

In our last chapter we have necessarily rather anticipated events in order not to break the sequence of the Duke of Normandy's letters, but we must now return to the results of M. de St.-Didier's mission to Prague.

Feeling sure that his royal client would be able to fulfil the dauphine's requirements, the faithful De St.-Didier set out on his return journey to France, reaching Paris on February the third.

And what was the first news that greeted him on his arrival?

That on January 28th, at eight o'clock in the evening, whilst crossing the Place du Carousel in front of Madame de Rambaud's house, the duke had been assailed by assassins, and brought within an ace of death by their murderous steel. He received no less than six wounds, one so perilously near the heart, that had not the point of the dagger been deflected by a medal which the prince was wearing at the time, certain death must have ensued.

As it was, grave fears for his life were entertained for many months, his ultimate recovery being greatly due to the untiring devotion with which Madame de Rambaud nursed him back to life.

(It strikes us a little curious to find that by way of rendering "first aid" the good lady applied *thirty-five leeches* to the wounded man whilst awaiting the arrival of the doctors!)

Of course there is no doubt that—to borrow M. Provin's strong phrase, "it was Charles X. who put the daggers into the assassins' hands."

Before ever M. de St.-Didier had left Prague, a swift messenger with strict orders to compass the duke's death had sped on ahead of him.

But once again the poor hunted life which was threatened so persistently and so systematically was preserved by what seemed almost a miracle.

(Only a few weeks after his arrival in Paris, a box of candied fruits had been left for the duke by an anonymous donor at Madame Albuoys' door.

Happily, however, the intended victim of this gift was too wise to taste them. He handed them over to a medical student, asking him to analyse them, and warning him that he believed them to be poisoned.

The young analyst started his researches by tasting one of the fruits, and was thereupon taken so seriously ill that it was some days before he recovered from the effects.

The sender of the treacherous gift was never discovered.)

As soon as the prince's convalescence was established, Madame de Rambaud decided that by way of answering the dauphine's demand for more details and more convincing proofs of Louis XVII.'s survival, she would go herself to Prague as bearer of the information.

Buoyed up by hope that better days were really in sight, and believing that after having heard all she had to say the dauphine would certainly send for her brother, Madame de Rambaud started in the end of July, accompanied by M. de St.-Didier.

Though such a long journey at that time of day was a very serious undertaking for a woman of her years, the faithful soul would gladly have travelled double as far, for

the sake of her beloved nursling of long ago, and in the hopes of securing for him the longed-for interview.

They agreed that it would be wiser for M. de St.-Didier to seek only an audience for himself in the first place.

This he did, with the result that on the 8th of August, he was admitted to a private interview with the duchess. But his heart sank at the chilling reception which she bestowed on him. Clearly she had never meant her challenge to the duke to be taken up.

She greeted her father's old servant with the coldly uttered words, "I understand that you wish to see me, what is your business?"

"I hastened to reply," says M. de St.-Didier, "that I was there on behalf of the Duc de Normandie, her brother, to entreat that she would give him an audience and to assure her that I no longer felt the slightest doubt as to his identity."

The dauphine's reply was brief and decisive.

"I am absolutely convinced that my brother is dead, having every proof that he is."

And when, by way of strengthening his case, St.-Didier alluded to the prince's remarkable knowledge of certain little-known facts and incidents, the duchess cut him short.

"Those things were no doubt in print," she broke in, "and, of course, he had learnt them up from some foreign papers."

Nothing daunted, St.-Didier declared that it was quite impossible that the facts in question could ever have been published. But the most exasperating moment for the devoted St.-Didier came when, as he alluded to the duke's attempted assassination, the dauphine openly jeered him.

"Come, come, Monsieur," she cried, with a great show of incredulity, "assassination is surely too big a word!"

"Alas! Madame," retorted St.-Didier, "there is no room for any doubt on that point, though allow me to remind you that no one takes the trouble to assassinate impostors, *they* are simply put on their trial."

"Pardon me, M. St.-Didier," exclaimed the dauphine, "that man is nothing more than an impostor, though I grant he is a clever one."

"I could see," says M. de St.-Didier, "that the duchess was becoming extremely irritable."

"Then permit me to reply, Madame," I retorted, "that if the prince is an impostor, all his friends, myself included, are impostors too."

"You misunderstand me, M. de. St.-Didier," she said quickly. "I know you are an honourable man, but nevertheless, you are the victim of an hallucination which I cannot share with you."

Then with praiseworthy persistency, St.-Didier again asked if she could have any real objection to seeing the prince for only a few minutes.

"I have every objection," she cried emphatically, "for in so doing I should appear to take the matter seriously."

After that, St.-Didier could say no more on that particular point. True to his trust, the loyal emissary nerved himself to make one crushing statement. He was pledged to the duke to tell his sister that he knew for a certain fact, that Louis XVIII. had made a death-bed declaration, which he had caused to be put in writing, in which he confessed to the knowledge of Louis XVII.'s existence, and bound it on his successor to make a public acknowledgment of Prince Charles Louis as the rightful king, and to place him on the throne.

The duke also knew that the Comte d'Artois had laid this paper before a very small committee, inviting its members to express their views on the matter, and that acting on their advice the count had himself torn the paper into shreds!

And more than this, the Duke of Normandy was well aware that at the present moment the Duc d'Angoulême was in secret correspondence with Décazes concerning himself, and that the nature of their correspondence was entirely hostile to his cause.

"Lastly," added St.-Didier, "the duke wished his sister

to understand that he possessed incontrovertible proofs of these facts."

"I could see," says St.-Didier, "that the dauphine was terribly agitated, and listened to my every word with painful attention. She struggled hard to hide her confusion, and though she flatly denied the charge of the secret correspondence with Décazes, H.R.H. passed over the question of the death-bed confession in absolute silence."

The whole interview had been so unpleasant, and the duchess was so upset, that St.-Didier dared not broach the subject of Madame de Rambaud's presence in Prague just then, much less intimate that she was in hopes of securing an audience from the dauphine. He decided therefore to wait till the next day, and then approach her on the subject.

Accordingly, on the following morning, he returned to the Palace, where he was received by the Comtesse d'Agoult, to whom he explained that by the Duke of Normandy's orders, he had brought Madame de Rambaud to Prague, in order that she might act as his mouth-piece, and confirm viva voce all that she had already written to the dauphine concerning the prince.

Madame d'Agoult promised most affably to do her best to secure an audience from H.R.H., and undertook to send a message to the Hotel of "The Three Limes" as soon as she had spoken to the princess.

The next morning the following note reached St.-Didier:

"Monsieur, I delivered your message to H.R.H., and I now send you her answer, namely,

"That she used to know Madame de Rambaud some forty years ago, when she was bedchamber woman to the Dauphin, but that as it is impossible to suppose that a woman of her advanced years could undertake such a long journey, she sees no reason why she should interview the person of that name who has accompanied you to Prague.

"H.R.H. further instructs me to say that having read all the papers you transmitted to her, she cannot find any reason for altering her decision upon a certain point. You will understand to what she refers."

After reading this letter, De St.-Didier decided that the sooner both he and Madame de Rambaud left Prague the better.

And he judged wisely, for on the heels of the dauphine's refusal to interview Madame de Rambaud, came a police order, commanding her to leave the city at once.

So this was how the "saintly Duchesse d'Angoulême" treated the devoted old friend, whom she had known from her babyhood, and who in spite of her advanced age had borne all the fatigue of the long journey from Paris to Prague!

And yet at his first interview with the dauphine, the latter had assured M. St.-Didier that if anything could convince her, it would be Madame de Rambaud's testimony!

One can only account for the dauphine's heartless persistency in refusing to see her brother by supposing that she dared not trust herself to meet him face to face, lest she should be overwhelmed by all the proofs he could give of his identity, and forced to own him as the rightful king of France.

It must have been a sore trial to the brave old lady to carry the tidings of her lost journey to the Duke of Normandy, and this fresh disappointment evidently cut the unhappy man to the quick.

Yet within a week or two of Madame de Rambaud's return, we find him making another desperate effort to touch his sister's heart. This attempt took a most pathetic form.

Amongst the relics belonging to the dauphin's childhood, Madame de Rambaud had piously preserved a little blue silk coat, which the child had worn in the happier days gone by.

This little garment the prince now cut in two halves, and sent one half to the dauphine.[1]

"Surely when she sees this," he said, "old memories will be stirred within her, and her heart *must* soften at the sight of the little coat which she will remember that I used to wear in those better days before our troubles began."

But even the fragment of that little garment failed to touch her. Small wonder that in the bitterness of his soul, her brother wrote to her:

"You must often have read the lovely story of Joseph sold by his own brethren. Well, I am more pitiable to-day than Joseph ever was, for *I* am sold to my enemies by my only sister, who turns a deaf ear and refuses to hear that I am still in existence, whereas though Jacob *was* very old when *he* heard rumours that Joseph was 'yet alive,' he hastened down into Egypt at once to see him and identify him as his son."

Surely in the biting irony of these words, the unhappy duke betrays how poignantly the iron has entered into his soul!

It had been at Dresden that Madame de Rambaud had met the Duke of Normandy on her return from Prague. He had gone there on a flying visit to his family, returning to Paris on September 2nd. His wife and children were now permanently settled at Dresden, where, thanks to the good offices of la Baronne de Génerès, they enjoyed a good position.

The baronne was a rich young widow, who, having been introduced to Louis XVII. in Paris, was fired with enthusiasm for his cause, and hastening to devote all her means and energy to his service, had betaken herself to Crossen for the purpose of befriending his family.

Here she had played the part of a good angel, for at that

[1] As to the other half of this little blue coat, it is now in the possession of M. Henri de Bourbon (see *Correspondance Intime et Inédite de Louis XVII.*, vol. i. p. 148).

"THE LITTLE BLUE COAT"

juncture, Madame Naundorf and her children were in terribly straitened circumstances.

After a time, the baronne persuaded them to go with her to Dresden. Here she set up house with them, introducing Madame Naundorf as the Duchess of Normandy and calling the children no longer Naundorfs but De Bourbons.

Their striking resemblance to the French royal family enlisted the interest and sympathy amongst the good folk of Dresden, and from the first, the new-comers were treated with the greatest respect and consideration even by the State officials.

(In time, however, the Saxon Government saw fit to recommend the De Bourbon family to "move on," so very early in 1838 they went to Switzerland, where Bremond hospitably received them in his castle of Grandclos.)

Considerable interest attaches to the De Bourbons' stay in Dresden, but our space allows us to relate only one incident associated with it.[1]

This occurred shortly before the prince's arrival and almost immediately before the disastrous failure of Madame de Rambaud's mission to Prague.

It having come to Madame de Génerès' knowledge that the Duchesse d'Angoulême had arrived in Dresden with her nephew, the Duc de Bordeaux, for a brief visit, she determined that by fair means or foul the royal aunt should be coerced into seeing her nephews and nieces.

That the dauphine must have been well aware of their presence in Dresden, there was no doubt.

For on her arrival, a certain Madame R——, who gave lessons to the younger De Bourbons, received a private summons from the duchess to wait on her on the morning of August 5th.

Great was the modest teacher's surprise at this royal mandate, the reason for which she could never understand, but with which of course she was prepared to comply.

[1] This is recorded in *Les Intrigues Dévoilées*, vol. iii. pp. 336–338.

Meanwhile, Madame de Génerès, having solicited an audience with the dauphine, was informed that H.R.H. would see her on the evening of August 4th, at the Castle of Pilnitz, where she would be dining that evening with the King of Saxony.

Having this clue as to the duchess's whereabouts, the baronne determined to turn it to advantage with respect to her plan for her protégés.

Accordingly she proceeded to make interest with Mlle. Dupont, who was the lady directress of the royal household, to allow her to bring the Duchess of Normandy and her children to look on at the banquet from the gallery, which overlooked the royal dining-hall.

Having gained permission to do so, the enterprising baronne set out in good time with her little party and managed to instal them in very prominent places in the gallery.

It soon became evident that the royal diners were aware of the presence of these onlookers in the gallery. For in the course of the dinner, the Princess Royal of Saxony, who had been apparently much interested in the children, presently identified Princess Amélie by the help of her eye-glass.

"Look up yonder," she said to the young Duc de Bordeaux, glancing towards the gallery, "and you'll see your cousins."

"Cousins indeed! Madame," retorted the boy, "I can assure you I have plenty of *that* sort of cousin!"

When the royalties left the table to take coffee in another salon, Madame de Génerès drove her protégés downstairs and planted them in the most conspicuous places in the corridor, where favoured spectators were allowed to stand whilst the King of Saxony and his guests passed by.

The dauphine, who was leaning on the king's arm, started visibly when she found herself face to face with the children, whose extraordinary likeness to her own family could not be disputed.

MADAME AMÉLIE DE BOURBON, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XVII.

"Who are those People?"

Fixing Amélie — who was the living image of herself — she asked the king hurriedly, "Who are those people?"

The monarch's answer was not audible, but it may be taken for granted that he said nothing unkind with regard to the children.

About an hour later, Madame de Génerès presented herself for an audience with the duchess according to previous arrangement. To her surprise she was informed that the dauphine could not receive her.

Feeling then, that she had nothing more to lose, the baronne went home and wrote to the duchess, informing her that her brother's children were living in Dresden with their mother, the Duchess of Normandy, and entreating her not to leave Saxony without seeing them. She was convinced, proceeded the baronne, "that she need only see them to feel sure that the father of these children could not possibly be any one but the royal orphan of the Temple, her own brother!"

Almost immediately after its despatch, this letter was brought back to the writer, with a message from the duchess that she had no time to attend to any one, as she was on the point of leaving Dresden.

All the same, it was quite clear that she had opened the letter, because the seal had been cut round in a manner peculiar to herself.

On the following morning, when Madame R——, also according to previous arrangement, arrived at the dauphine's apartments for the interview to which she had been commanded, she was told that unforeseen circumstances had obliged H.R.H. to cut short her visit in Dresden, and that she was therefore unable to see Madame R——. The latter on her return home was followed by a messenger from the duchess, who delivered a packet to Madame R—— containing sixty crowns.

To the day of her death, Madame R—— could never understand why she was summoned to the royal presence

in the first place, or why such a large sum of money was bestowed on her in the second.

The duchess left Dresden at eleven o'clock that morning, only a few hours before the arrival of her brother in that city.

It is perhaps only fair to add that, according to M. Gruau, the dauphine spent a very unhappy night after the dinner at the castle of Pilnitz.

In a letter, which he wrote to the Baron Capelle, M. Gruau states,[1] "That on that night, the lady-in-waiting, who always slept in the room adjoining H.R.H., heard her pacing to and fro in her apartment, weeping bitterly and moaning repeatedly, 'My brother, my poor brother!' After this had continued for some time, the lady-in-waiting growing alarmed went to inquire if H.R.H. were ill.

"The latter immediately asked if she had overheard anything.

"'Nothing, Madame,' was the glib answer.

"'Well, if you did overhear anything,' said the poor duchess in evident alarm, '*never repeat it.*'"

[1] See *Légitimité*, vol. iii. p. 575.

CHAPTER IX

Louis XVII. institutes legal proceedings against the Duchesse d'Angoulême—Twofold object of the lawsuit—The Duchesse d'Angoulême appeals to Louis-Philippe—Arrest of Louis XVII.—Seizure of his papers—Imprisonment—M. Gruau takes steps to procure Louis XVII.'s release—Louis XVII. appeals to Louis-Philippe—Louis XVII. released from prison and banished from France—A poor woman's last tribute.

ALL his letters, all his appeals, both direct and indirect, all the forcible affirmations of the Duc de Normandie's friends as to his undoubted identity with the son of Louis XVI., having failed to touch the dauphine's heart, her ill-used brother at last fulfilled his threat and took definite steps to obtain his recognition through the medium of the law.

Having therefore decided to institute legal proceedings against the Duchesse d'Angoulême, a formal summons was served upon Marie-Thérèse-Charlotte de France, Duchesse d'Angoulême, citing her to attend at the Bar of the Courts, and to ensure the legality of the procedure, M. Antoine-Louis de France, Duc d'Angoulême, her husband, was cited also.[1]

[1] Donnê assignation au parquet de M. le Procureur du Roi, à dame Marie-Thérèse-Charlotte de France, Duchesse d'Angoulême, demeurant Prague royaume de Bohême, et pour la validité de la procédure à M. Antoine-Louis de France, Duc d'Angoulême, son mari, où étant et parlant à l'un des messieurs les substituts de mondit sieur le Procureur du Roi près le tribunal civil de première instance de la Seine qui a visé le présent et aussi au parquet de Monsieur le Procureur du Roi, à Charles-Philippe de France, Comte d'Artois, frère de Louis XVI., oncle du requérant, où étant et parlant à l'un des substituts de mondit sieur le Procureur du Roi qui a visé le present. A comparaître aujourd'hui en quatre mois, délai de la loi, devant Messieurs les President et Juges composant la première chambre du tribunal civil de première instance du département de la Seine, séante au Palais de Justice, à Paris, neuf heures et demie du matin pour ; attendu que le requérant n'est autre, ainsi qu'il en sera justifié en temps et lieux, tant par titres que par témoins, que Louis-Charles Duc de Normandie, né à Versailles, département de Seine-et-Oise, 27 Mars 1785, de Louis-Auguste, Roi de France et de Navarre et de Antoinette-Joséphe-Jeanne, Archiduchesse d'Autriche, reine de France et de Navarre, son épouse. . . . Signé: Garnier.

Charles X. was also arraigned to appear in the same way and place.

These summons were dated June 13th, 1836.

The twofold object of this suit which was duly and formally set forth in the lengthy legal citation [1] was briefly:

(*a*) To establish the identity of the plaintiff, Charles-Louis, Duc de Normandie.

"(*b*) To recover his rightful share of the property, which in the natural course of events he would have inherited from his parents, and the whole of which the Duchesse d'Angoulême had appropriated."

This summons was published in the law-courts paper, known as *Le Droit*, of Friday, June 17th, 1836.

The editor thought fit to preface the announcement as follows:

"SUCCESSION OF LOUIS XVI.

"We have already announced the impending law-suit instituted by M. de Naundorf versus Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême.

"Having now succeeded in obtaining a copy of the summons which this new pretender has taken out, we think it well to place the text of said summons before our readers."

The *Temps* of June 18th also reproduced the summons, which was duly served on the royalties resident at that date at Prague.

What followed on this startling proceeding?

Within less than twenty-four hours of receiving the citation, the duchess actually demeaned herself to send an autograph letter to the cousin whom she loathed—son of the regicide Philippe Égalité—the usurper of her uncle's throne! In this letter, she humbly craved Louis-Philippe to obstruct all further legal proceedings on the part of the Pretender Naundorf.

"And I know for a positive fact," affirms M. Gruau, the

[1] See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime de France*, vol. ii. pp. 298–299.

former procurator of the king under Louis XVI., "I know for a fact past doubting, that measures were instantly taken to give effect to the duchess's petition."

The accuracy of this statement is proved by the arrest of the prince within forty-eight hours of the receipt of the summons at Prague.

On the afternoon of June 15th, no less than five police agents arrived at Madame de Rambaud's house, which was Louis XVII.'s permanent *pied-à-terre* during his sojourn in Paris, and demanded to see the prince.

Having been admitted to his room, they then proceeded to inform him without any ceremony or attempt at legal formality of any kind, that they had come to arrest him and to seize all his papers in the name of the king and law and justice. Thereupon they laid violent hands upon an enormous portfolio, containing all the documents that Louis XVII. had collected as evidence at the forthcoming lawsuit.

Was there ever a more shameless proceeding!

Small wonder that, having taken steps to despoil her victim of all his weapons of defence, the duchess should declare she felt no apprehension whatever with regard to the "pretender's" threatened prosecution.

On the afternoon of his arrest, Louis XVII. had two young friends with him.

Without evincing the least perturbation when the police entered his room, he turned to one of these young men, saying, "Will you be good enough to fetch my solicitor."

His manner was so imposing that the police dared not object, and in less than half-an-hour M. Gruau was on the spot.

"I found H.R.H.," says the latter, "seated quietly in his chair, but from the wild haste with which the police were tying up all his papers into bundles, I guessed that they had been in hopes of accomplishing this business before my arrival."

In several of his published works, M. Gruau gives a de-

tailed account of this outrageous proceeding, from which we quote the following extract.

"After having expressed my deep sympathy with the prince in this fresh disaster which had overtaken him so unexpectedly, and which in his case was such a disgraceful breach of justice—seeing that at that very moment he had placed himself under the aegis of the French magistracy by invoking the help of his country's laws on his own behalf—I then turned to the principal police agent and desired him to produce his warrant for arresting my client.

"Oh! there's no time to go into that now," was the insolent retort, "we are in too much of a hurry."

"Having been formerly procurator of the king,"[1] I said, "and being now in charge of the prince's case, I am well posted in the intricacies of the law. I know, moreover, that when the privacy of a citizen's dwelling has been violated and his personal liberty attacked, that it is imperative for those responsible for these proceedings to produce a special warrant, enforcing the passive obedience on the part of the person arrested.

"If you refuse to produce such a warrant, I shall oppose the arrest of the prince, knowing full well that in so doing, I shall have the law on my side."

Thereupon the police agent showed a marked change of front and produced a common printed form, signed by Gisquet, Prefect of Police, and authorising the bearer to arrest any one whose name he saw fit to enter in a certain space left blank on the form.

M. Naundorf's name had been written in, with an additional note directing the seizure of all the papers found at his residence.

It was absolutely out of order to use such a form as a warrant for an arrest, without specifying any formal charge against the person so arrested, but as the Prefect's signature lent it a certain semblance of authority, I could not dispute its legality.

[1] "Procureur du Roi." We have no exact equivalent for this official.

I therefore restricted myself to inquiring on what charge they were arresting M. Naundorf.

"On the charge of being a foreigner," they replied.

I then made a protest in writing against the placing of this obstruction in the execution of the impending lawsuit, which I read aloud. . . . Further I repudiated the charge formulated against M. Naundorf of being a foreigner, seeing that he claimed to be French by birth and to have been born at the Palace of Versailles.

I then demanded a formal receipt of the papers belonging to the prince, which was accordingly written, setting forth that 202 pieces had been seized that afternoon at M. Naundorf's house.

This receipt was signed by three police agents.[1]

Having accompanied his maltreated client to the door of his prison, Gruau at once communicated with Gisquet, Prefect of the Police, demanding an immediate interview.

In order to gain time, the latter replied that he was too busy to see M. Gruau till the next day.

"Accordingly," says the faithful counsel, "I presented myself on the morrow at his office, accompanied by the Marquis de la Ferrière and M. Brisquet. I began by claiming the release of the prince, who, whether he were a foreigner or not, had every right to the protection of the law. And all the more so as he was already involved in legal proceedings.

"This irregular behaviour on the part of the authorities," I added, "is the more reprehensible because the prince has never brought himself within reach of the law by the slightest infraction of any of its regulations.

"Upon this, the Prefect admitted that though M. Naundorf had been kept under close observation ever since his arrival in Paris, his conduct had been found irreproachable in every respect. He said, however, that as the proceedings against him had been instituted by the Minister of the Interior, I ought to lodge my complaints with him.

[1] The original of this receipt is still extant.

"He said further that it was fortunate for my client that I had been so prompt in making my protest on his behalf, because he had received instructions from the authorities to expel M. Naundorf from Paris within twenty-four hours.

"As matters now stood, however, he would retain him in prison pending further operations, and allow me to visit him whenever I liked.

"Leaving the Préfecture I went straight to the residence of the Minister of the Interior. There I found that orders had been given that I was not to be admitted, and I never succeeded in seeing that functionary."

Gruau next appealed to the Minister of Justice, pleading that for the last three years his royal client had led a perfectly law-abiding existence in Paris, and urging that nothing could justify the violation of his personal liberty by his arrest or the forcible seizure of his papers, this action depriving him of all the valuable documents which he had collected so carefully and upon which he relied so greatly as evidence in his impending lawsuit.

But the good man's protests were all made in vain.

The authorities knew perfectly well that their conduct was indefensible; but nothing mattered so long as Louis XVII.'s voice was effectually silenced.

His loyal supporters, however, were not to be disposed of so easily, and accordingly his three legal advisers, Gruau, Leblanc, and Brisquet, joined in addressing another protest to the Minister of Justice, in which the following statement occurs:

"The King of France had been officially informed by their royal client that he intended to bring an action against his family for the restitution of his rights as a native of France and for the recovery of all the privileges of which he had been illegally deprived by a forged document, purporting to represent the certificate of his death.

"That on the 13th of the month he had caused a formal summons to be served upon the said royal family now residing at Prague, citing them to appear at the bar of the

procurator of the king, which summons had been duly examined and sealed by the procurator himself.

"In these conditions," asked the lawyers, "how could the authorities justify their action in arresting their royal client and depriving him of all his papers?"

And they concluded their very lengthy protest by praying that M. Naundorf might be released without further delay and that his papers might be returned to him forthwith.

Yet other appeals were made to various Bars not only in Paris, but also in some of the leading provincial towns.

In one of these appeals, the following passage occurs:

"Why within two days after the public announcement of M. Naundorf's impending lawsuit was he suddenly arrested by the police, and, though no formal charge was made against him, was he removed from his house and his private papers forcibly seized?

"Every one knows that for two whole years the authorities have been seeking an excuse to arrest him and that all his words and actions have been diligently spied on, yet he has been left at liberty, simply because he has never violated a tittle of the law. And now we understand that the State has ordered his expulsion from France on the ground of his being a foreigner.

"But what *is* his nationality? Since 1810 he has lived nowhere but in Prussia, where the press declares that, though he was known by the name of Naundorf, no one ever discovered either the name of his birthplace or the origin of his family. . . .

"We have no law which justifies either the expulsion of foreigners after a provisional arrest or the seizure of their private papers, the latter proceeding being doubly reprehensible when these documents are required for an impending lawsuit."

On his side, the luckless prisoner sent a written protest to Louis Philippe, beginning:

"Sire, till now I have always regarded your accession to my father's throne simply as a dispensation of Providence,

consequently on arriving here, I held out the olive branch. And what have I required of you?

"Nothing but plain justice! And are not monarchs bound to protect the innocent?

"Therefore why have your ministers arrested me in your name?

"Ever since 1814, I have appealed vainly to my family.

"They have wrought their own destruction, having sown discord amongst the French people by their own wickedness.

"Since 1831, I have addressed myself specially to you."

After alluding to a letter sent to Louis-Philippe from Crossen and others written subsequently from Paris, the writer goes on:

"You cannot conscientiously declare that I am not the son of Louis XVI. and of Marie Antoinette. No! *you cannot*. That is why my house was invaded, that is why I am lying here in this dungeon! You *know* that I speak nothing but the truth, when I affirm that I am the orphan of the Temple.

"My life has been made the toy of others' intrigues; it has been one long chain of linked disasters and sufferings, and now you add your share to my bitter portion of woe.

"Why did you throw me into this prison?

"Surely in more than nineteen years of imprisonment I have endured enough! but now under your orders, I must complete the twentieth year! And again I ask *why?* Have I wronged a single soul in the world? Again and again I ask *why* am I in prison?

"Had I not been the true son of your martyred king, your police would never have arrested me at the very moment when I was at last able to submit all the proofs and evidence confirming my identity to the public scrutiny of properly qualified judges!

"I was perfectly aware that I was surrounded by spies, but I never dreamt that the King of France would himself behave so unjustly towards the Child of the Temple!

"Had I not trusted you, Monsieur, so implicitly, your police would never have caught me!

"But, Sire, what is your object? Since Providence has placed you on the throne, you have nothing to fear from the son of Louis XVI.

"Have I not already told you that I did not come hither to claim the crown?

"I came here simply as a French prince, seeking to restore order to my unhappy country and trusting that I might effect a lasting reconciliation between those discordant factions which are now producing such distressing developments throughout France.

"For believe me, neither you nor the royal family nor indeed France herself can hope to enjoy peace until I have been publicly acknowledged as the son of Louis XVI.

"That is the only measure which can be adopted to stop these disastrous intrigues in which the Duchesse d'Angoulême is involved.

"Once more I offer you words of peace, once more I protest that all I claim is the restitution of the civil rights which are incontestably mine; once more I repeat that I am the son of the martyred King, and as such, I appeal for the last time to your sense of justice.

"If you refuse to listen to it, I can only cite you to appear before His judgment seat, Who knows who I am, Who has saved my life and preserved me till this day.

"If you are not to be numbered with my other persecutors, I adjure you to set me at liberty at once.

"I adjure you also to insist that my enemies should show cause why the prosecution of my rights before the properly appointed tribunal of my country should be prevented.

"No king calling himself equitable can interfere with the course of justice.

"Signed Charles-Louis, written this eleventh day of my illegal imprisonment, June 26th, 1836."

Louis-Philippe was also besieged by a joint letter from Gruau, Xavier, Laprade, and Brisquet written June 28th.

This was followed on June 11th, by a detailed and eloquently written appeal from M. Crémieux, also one of the

prince's advocates, whilst Gruau and his colleagues addressed an appeal to the Ministry. But all and every protest and appeal proved fruitless.

Neither State officials nor private individuals betrayed any sense of honour or rectitude where the hapless Duc de Normandie was concerned.

And so it came to pass that on July 16th, 1836,[1] after having been detained twenty-six days in prison, the son of Louis XVI. was driven out of Paris and practically deported from the country as if he had been nothing better than an "undesirable alien."

M. Gruau, who assisted at this melancholy departure, tells us that as the Duke of Normandy was stepping into the diligence, a poor woman approached M. Gruau, and asked with the tears streaming down her face, if she might be permitted to offer a bunch of carnations to the brother of the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

"I have nothing better to offer him," she wept, "but I wish I had, for all the good people in Paris know that he is the son of Louis XVI."

"The prince," says M. Gruau, "accepted the flowers, pressing them to his heart."

Therewith the coach set off on the road to Calais, bearing with it the despised and rejected fortunes of France.

Outside on the top of the diligence were two faithful friends, though they only passed as ordinary passengers, MM. Juery and Victor Gruau—brother of the procurator—both of whom accompanied the prince to Calais (Victor Gruau went on with him to London), whilst within the diligence were two gendarmes in charge of the royal traveller, for whose attendance on himself, he was mulcted to the extent of 200 francs.

It is no small testimony to Louis XVII.'s unselfishness to find that he wrote to his wife from prison on June 22nd, assuring her that he was quite well and had plenty of faith-

[1] In writing from London to his wife, Louis XVII. gave the date as July 10th of his departure from Paris.

ful friends, and saying never a word that could betray that he was not writing as usual from Madame de Rambaud's house.

He enclosed a note of 500 crowns for her expenses.

It was so characteristic of him to spare all anxiety to his family as far as possible.

CHAPTER X

"Adieu, Français!"—Expulsion of Louis XVII. from France—His arrival at Calais—Stormy crossing in the *Ferret*—Takes up his residence in London—Louis XVII.'s petition for the restitution of his civil rights—Legal proceedings instituted against him by French Government—Persecution of his friends in Paris—Prosecution of Louis XVII. abandoned in Paris—Remarkable offer sent anonymously to Louis XVII.—Offer refused—Renewal of offer in letter from De St.-Didier—Second refusal—Louis XVII. sends for his family to come to England—Their arrival in London and settling at Camberwell—Desiré Roussel—M. Gruau's suspicions concerning him—Constant fears for the prince's safety—Desperate attack on the prince's life—Arrest of Roussel—Curious and suggestive coincidence of dates—Louis XVII.'s gift for invention of pyrotechnics—A further attempt on his life—"Fresh disaster at Minerva House, Camberwell."

ALTHOUGH according to M. Gruau, Louis XVII. wore a perfectly composed, even a bright face as he strode through the knot of friends, who had gathered—to the number of 300—in the yard of the coaching house to bid him God-speed, and although as he drove away, he kissed his hand smilingly to the little crowd, calling out, "Adieu Français, adieu Français!" yet when he left Paris on that July morning 1836, he was far sadder, far more forlorn than when he had entered it, ragged, penniless, and friendless on a certain May evening three years earlier. During his stay in Paris, he had certainly grown rich in the possession of faithful followers and had made many devoted friends, some of whom would never desert his cause; but on the other hand, he had lost all the fond illusions he had cherished so persistently with regard to his family, so that now, with all his hopes of ever being reinstated amongst his own kindred definitely quenched, Louis XVII. felt poor indeed.

Truly he had come to his own and his own had not received him!

The *Courier du Pas de Calais* reports how at four

o'clock in the afternoon, a crowd was assembled outside the hotel D'Angleterre awaiting the arrival of an illustrious traveller, "the Duc de Normandie, alias the Dauphin, alias Louis XVII., who was being escorted to Calais by two gendarmes *en route* for England. . . .

"During his dinner, the crowd looked in at the window, contemplating the features of this descendant of their favourite Henri IV. with great interest. After dinner, Louis XVII. condescended to follow the diligence on foot outside the town, being still escorted by the gendarmes.

"He walked bare-headed, bowing graciously to the people and giving alms liberally to the poor who begged of him. . . .

"Whoever he may be, no one can deny that he is remarkably dignified and has a very imposing presence."

The *Ferret*, on which the prince crossed to Dover, had a terrible passage owing to a very violent storm which lasted six hours.

The poor Marquis de Ferrière was so literally prostrated by sea-sickness that his beautiful gold-embroidered cap fell overboard, and Dover was not reached until three o'clock on the following afternoon.

Here the travellers spent the night at an hotel, the poor prince revelling in the sense of liberty and the enjoyment of a comfortable bed after his month in prison.

From Dover they went by road to Herne Bay, where they embarked for London.

"I can assure you that my health is excellent," Louis XVII. writes to his wife, "but my hair has turned suddenly so white, that I am sending you a little bit to see." [1]

Soon after Louis XVII. was settled in London, he set to work to draw up an exhaustive petition to the Chamber of Deputies and the Chamber of Peers in Paris, suing for the restitution of his civil rights.

This was despatched on January 10th, 1837.

Meanwhile the French Government was contemptible

[1] This is noteworthy, for did not Marie Antoinette's beautiful hair turn snow-white in a single night at the beginning of the terrible Revolution ?

enough to institute legal proceedings against the "exiled Naundorf" on the charge of his being a swindler—*escroc.*[1]

Under cover of this pretext, his friends' houses were invaded and where possible their papers were seized.

Amongst their victims were the Marquis de Feuillards, Mesdames Rambaud, Génerès, and de Beauregard—the latter's house was invaded by police agents at four o'clock in the morning—MM. Laprade, the Marquis de Ferrière, and many others.

M. Geoffroy, the keeper of the Archives of the Prefecture of Deux Sèvres, in whose possession certain papers referring to the prince's claims were discovered, was promptly dismissed from his post, whilst Madame de Rambaud was cited to appear before the magistrates and subjected to a lengthy cross-examination. She underwent it with the greatest sang-froid, insisting throughout on "Naundorf's" identity with Louis XVII.

On August 4th, Louis XVII. addressed a letter to the French Government protesting against his friends being exposed to these domiciliary visits.

"Of course," says M. de Gruau, "all this was done to intimidate the prince's friends, and with a view to suppressing any secret correspondence, which might be going on between his partisans and the august exile. Moreover they sought by these means to check all demonstrations of devotion to the prince and the transmission of all pecuniary help.

"But perhaps the chief underlying motive for this abominable prosecution was to invalidate Monseigneur's appeal to the State for justice."

This disgraceful suit was purposely dragged out till January 1841, when it was dropped with the admission "That there was not sufficient ground for pursuing the charge of swindling preferred against M. Naundorf."

("Qu'il n'y a pas lieu à suivre pour le delet d'escroquerie imputé à M. Naundorf.")

[1] For a detailed account of this prosecution, see *Correspondance Intime et Inédite de Louis XVII.*, vol. ii. pp. 435–436.

Strangely enough, however, for reasons that have never been satisfactorily explained, the Ministers of Louis-Philippe were evidently anxious to come to terms with Louis XVII. during his stay in London.

On August 1st, 1837, he received the following letter:

"MONSEIGNEUR,—This morning I breakfasted with the Marquis —— to whom my zeal in your cause is well known.

"He said to me, 'If I had a chance of advising the prince, I should say to him, Now-a-days, crowns bristle with thorns, they are not to be coveted! But if the prince is philosophical enough to prefer his own peace and that of his family to any other advantages, if—to put it plainly—he will relinquish all pretence to the throne, I am quite ready to arrange a compact with the king, by which he will guarantee to the prince,

"'(*a*) The possession of the box which is in the Palace;

"'(*b*) A sum of one million francs, which shall be paid on the spot to enable him to discharge all his debts.

"'(*c*) An income amounting to one million francs to be paid to him as the rightful apanage of a duly recognised prince, and even more than that amount should he desire it.

"' I only make one condition, namely, that my name is not to be mentioned even to the prince, if he accepts my offer, which I authorise you to convey to him at your earliest convenience.'

"This, Monseigneur, was exactly what was said to me this very morning. I am therefore awaiting your orders.

"I should have communicated this to M. Gruau, had not the person in question exacted a promise from me that it should be told to you only.

"I conclude therefore with the motto, which is my own, 'Tout à vous, à la vie et à la mort!' Fichet de Kergus."[1]

Before going further, it may be well to speak more particularly concerning the box mentioned in the first clause of this proposal.

[1] The original of this letter is extant amongst the family documents in Holland, and was produced in court as evidence by M. Jules Favre in 1874 (see *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. ii. p. 316).

It was one filled with jewels and papers and had been hidden in the Tuileries by Louis XVI. in the presence of the dauphin during the early days of trouble and unrest which heralded the outburst of the actual revolution.

"We possess," says M. Lenotre in the article which he contributes to *La Question Louis XVII.*, "a valuable description of the two adjoining rooms, which were occupied respectively by the king and the dauphin at the Tuileries from October 1789 to August 1792.

"The grand 'chambre de parade,' in which Louis XVI. held his 'levées' but in which he never slept, communicated directly with the rather small room, where the king had his real bed.

"This was placed in a recess formed on one side by a little dressing-room and on the other by a narrow panelled passage about six feet long and three feet wide, having no windows and consequently depending on the open doors for its supply of light.

"It was in this little passage that, with the help of his locksmith Gamain, Louis XVI. contrived to conceal the iron safe by means of a sliding panel in the wall, behind which an exceedingly rough and ready hole had been made in the masonry. . . . The king's bed had a dome-shaped canopy, hung with flame-coloured silken curtains, whilst the mattresses, we are told, were so stuffed with wool that they were absolutely hard.

"Opposite the bed was the fireplace, on one side of which a prie-Dieu was placed. . . .

"At the foot of the bed, at a distance of five to six feet from the floor, there was a small casement in the wall, which commanded a view of the dauphin's room and was situated exactly over the head of his little bed.

"Formerly this casement had been closed, but the king had it opened and with his own hands fastened a bolt on the inside, which bore marks of having been very hastily affixed. . . ."

What touching solicitude for his child's safety is suggested by this simple detail!

It was in the iron safe in the little passage behind the sliding panel that Louis XVI. concealed the aforesaid box, and after this detailed description of the arrangement of their adjoining apartments, it is quite easy to understand how the dauphin witnessed this proceeding on his father's part.

In 1835, Louis XVII. had proposed to Louis-Philippe to find that box in the presence of witnesses, stipulating however that he should be allowed to carry it away as his own property.

In answer to the proposal, Louis-Philippe despatched his aide-de-camp to the prince to inform him that he would be at liberty to present himself at the Tuileries and to make the search he proposed in the presence of witnesses, but only on the clear understanding that the box and its contents were handed over to the king.

As Louis XVII. flatly refused these conditions, the matter went no further.[1]

The following letter was sent by Louis XVII. in answer to that received August 1st.

"London, *August 7th*, 1837.

"I thank you for your letter, and as to your professions of good faith I can assure you that I have always believed you to be a perfectly honourable man. I feel sure that you would not deceive me and that I can depend upon your accuracy in carrying out my directions.

"I therefore charge you to say to the Marquis de —— that he is to impress on the 'person' whom you mention, that I have lost everything *except* my honour.

"With that, his only heritage, the son of Louis XVI. casts himself upon the mercy of the Almighty, Who knows how to protect him. Tell those who have no belief in God, that *I* put all my trust in Him and in my country.

"That country will submit to God's will in His own good time; and even were I to lose my belief and my strong faith in the Eternal justice, I should still prefer death to entering into any dealings with Louis-Philippe.

[1] See *Le Dernier Roi Légitime*, vol. ii. p. 316.

"When I returned to France, I considered him to be a member of my own royal family, and I failed to see how he could be regarded as more of an usurper than either Louis XVIII. or Charles X. had been. At that period, he might well have combined with me, for my only anxiety was to save my country from further anarchy.

"I had no wish to disturb the peace of France. On the contrary, through his aide-de-camp, M. de la Borde, I transmitted papers to him declaring my wishes for the happiness and prosperity of my country. But my views with respect to Louis-Philippe are changed now. To-day, I have discovered that the King of the French is neither Bourbon, nor Orleans, no! *nor even a Frenchman!*

"The son of the martyr-king will never deal with this criminal!

"CHARLES-LOUIS DE BOURBON, Duc de Normandie."

"Not even a Frenchman": here the prince refers to what was known as the affaire Chiappini.

Chiappini was the name of an Italian gaoler.

According to certain statements which appeared in the Memoirs of Baroness Ungern-Sternberg, a daughter of Philippe-Egalité, who was the father of Louis-Philippe—had been exchanged against a son of the aforesaid Chiappini.

This son, so it was declared, now occupied the French throne as Louis-Philippe.

Baroness Ungern-Sternberg, who published her memoirs under the startling title "Maria-Stella, or the Criminal exchange of a young lady of High Rank against a boy of the lowest extraction," was the daughter in question. She had married in the first place Lord Newborough, and after his death Maria-Stella had become the wife of Baron Ungern-Sternberg.

The book was published in Paris and also throughout the Provinces in 1830.

This edifying publication was sold, we are told, "for the benefit of the poor."

Some weeks later, the French Government sent one of their own agents to London, a certain Baron Wolf, charged to set a subtle trap for the royal exile.

But Louis XVII. was equal to the occasion, as the following letter to Louis-Philippe's emissary will show.

"MONSIEUR LE BARON,—After giving due consideration to the proposals which you conveyed to me at our last conference on behalf of the French Government, I decline to enter into any explanations.

"As to Louis-Philippe, he repeatedly refused to accord me the justice that I had every right to demand. *I have nothing more to do with him.* As regards the Government, if they wish to receive an answer from me, let them address their communication in writing either to you or to my man of business, M. Gruau, No. 6 New London Street, Mark Lane, City, London.

"But I hereby state that I shall not condescend to give my attention to any document that is not signed by one of the Ministers and couched in the terms in which I ought to be approached.

"CHARLES-LOUIS, Duc de Normandie,

"LONDON, *September* 21, 1837.

"To Monsieur Baron de Wolf, Pauls Chain, 5 London" (*sic*).

It is interesting to see, that although the French Government thought themselves justified in prosecuting "Naundorf" as a swindler, they were nevertheless very persistent in seeking to enter into negotiations with him.

On December 19th, 1837, we find M. de St.-Didier—Louis XVII.'s old friend—writing to him from Paris, to warn him against this same Wolf who is back again from England.

St.-Didier describes the baron as a most dangerous and treacherous man, "gifted with such fascinating manners,

that he is able to impress most people with the idea that he is absolutely frank and disinterested."

That Louis XVII. should have refused these overtures does not surprise us, because we know and believe that he was Louis XVII., but would any Richemont or Hergevault or any other of the false dauphins have acted as he did in the same circumstances? What ordinary impostor would have adopted this course?

Would he not have *jumped* at such an offer, only too glad to barter his baseless and fraudulent pretensions against such solid advantages? Poor as Louis XVII. was at that moment, and the father of a large family, the assurance of a good income for the rest of his life must have been a very tempting bait to a man of fifty-two, who had aged prematurely under the lifelong stress of suffering and ill-treatment.

Yet Charles-Louis de Bourbon flung the glittering offer from him, with a lofty pride, which proclaimed his kingly descent and his royal contempt for all that savoured of bribes or compromises.

Surely neither swindler nor impostor was ever made of such stuff since the world began!

Even when, in the August of that same year, a proposal was made to Louis XVII., reaching him this time through his old and devoted friend Morel de St.-Didier, it failed to tempt him. This he also refused in very simple words, but with all the quiet dignity of a self-respecting man.

This was M. St.-Didier's letter, written August 29th, 1838.

"MONSIEUR,—I am commanded to transmit the following information to your R.H. This is an accurate account of a conversation which took place between M. X——, and myself.

"Having gone to his house by request, he confided to me that two individuals, both absolutely above suspicion, occupying high social positions and being large landowners in the neighbourhood, had called upon him quite recently.

"One of them, whom he has known intimately for many

years, said to him, 'We entirely agree with you as to the desirability of snatching the prince out of the hands of the English and transporting him to Switzerland, where he could be joined by his family, so I have come to tell you that we have formed a society for supplying him with the necessary funds for accomplishing this. We have three hundred million francs ready to place at his service, provided that he will accept the one condition on which we make the offer.

"'We will pay down 50,000 francs immediately to enable him to discharge his debts and to leave England for Switzerland, and as he will need a treasurer when he gets there, we will enter into communication with a Swiss banker, with whom we will lodge 240,000 francs. He can draw on this deposit for all his expenses ; the fund being always replenished by the contributions of our society.

"'As for you, if you will arrange this matter for us, you shall receive 10,000 francs.

"'Our promises, however, will only be fulfilled on the condition that the prince consents to join his family and settle in Switzerland at once. If he will not agree to this, *nothing can be done.*'"

Here surely was another offer which would have been too seducing to be refused by the average impostor.

But although this time the letter was signed, and signed too by his venerable friend, Louis XVII. was not to be tempted.

Once and for all he refused to accept any overtures which were not made in broad daylight and accompanied by a public recognition of his identity. Moreover, he had no wish to exchange England for Switzerland, and at length summoned his family to join him in London.

It was in the late autumn of 1838, that they arrived in England.

At that time Louis XVII. was lodging at 21 Clarence Place, one Mr. Batt being his landlord. Gruau de la Barre, his inseparable companion, was with him.

A good-sized house had been taken at Camberwell Green for the family, but though the prince and Gruau took their meals there, they still continued to sleep at Clarence Place, until their rooms in the new house had been made ready for them.

At half-past five on the evening of November 13th, whilst all the family were at dinner, the prince was told that a Frenchman was at the door in great distress and begging to see him.

On being cross-questioned, the stranger gave his name as Désiré Roussel, and said that he was a refugee from La Vendée, where he had been condemned to death for having taken part in the rising instigated by the Duchesse de Berri.

He further stated that three months ago he had left Switzerland for London,[1] where he had been trying ever since, but vainly, to get employment.

"For the last three months," says M. Gruau, who gives a detailed account of the incident,[2] "we fancied that we had occasionally seen a man lurking about the premises of Clarence place, but as the maid at the lodgings was known to have a sweetheart, we set the intruder down to be him.

"At the same time, we felt that we ought to be on the qui vive, for sundry disquieting rumours reached us occasionally, and we were well aware from the evil expressions that we sometimes saw on people's faces, that we were the objects of close and hostile observation.

"Feeling convinced that the prince's life was in constant danger, neither of us ever went out of doors without carrying firearms.

"On this occasion, however, Monseigneur feeling unusually lighthearted in the midst of his young family, forgot to be suspicious, and touched by the man's story, not only gave him half-a-crown, but told him that he might have his dinner in the kitchen every day till he found work.

[1] It is noteworthy that this man's departure from Switzerland must have exactly coincided with the date of the prince's refusal to go there.

[2] See *Correspondance Intime et Inédite de Louis XVII.*, vol. ii. pp. 551–55.

"I must confess that if the prince had only listened to me he would have cancelled that permission on the very next day. But his kindly nature made him deaf to all warnings, and he replied that he would rather run the risk of helping a rogue than that of refusing succour to the deserving. Though I could not account for it, Roussel impressed me most unpleasantly from the very first, though I never imagined that he was such a desperate villain as he proved.

"When, however, I asked him to show me his passport and he replied that he had left it at the Customs, my worst suspicions with regard to him were confirmed.

"Indeed I felt so uneasy about the man, that on returning to our rooms that evening I could not help saying to H.R.H.:

"'My prince, I do implore you to send that Roussel about his business. I can't tell you why, but I feel convinced that he is a tool in our enemies' hands.'

"But my royal friend belittled my fears, and as it was arranged that we should join the family and settle into the Camberwell house on the following Friday, the prince begged that I would let the matter rest till then. After our move, he promised to give more attention to Roussel.

"On Friday, November 17th, in the evening, the prince and I were busy preparing for our hegira. M. de La Prade was with us, and also Hilaireon our servant.

"That day, Desiré Roussel had declared that he felt too unwell to eat any dinner, and had professedly gone off to bed at the little inn where he lodged, which was at an equal distance from our lodgings and the house at Camberwell.

"We were still in Clarence Place at half-past eight, awaiting Hilaireon's return, whom we had sent to and from the house with various packages, when the prince had occasion to go to the garden lavatory.

"There was a frightfully thick fog that night, and I begged H.R.H. to let me accompany him out-of-doors.

"He refused my offer, however, and putting his revolver

down on the table, took a torch and went out, leaving M. Laprade and me together.

"All at once, we were startled by the loud report of fire-arms accompanied by the most piercing shriek.

"We rushed out into the garden, and following the direction of the cry, we found the prince stretched full length on the ground.

"'Take care, my friend,' he groaned, when I tried to lift him up, 'for I am wounded, but try and catch the wretch, for he must be somewhere in the garden.'

"I whipped out my revolver and, lighted by Laprade, I searched the garden, at the end of which I observed a little wicket standing open. This gate opened on to a narrow lane leading across country, and the assassin had evidently made his escape through that wicket, which was always kept closed. We then hastened back to the prince, and, helped by the people of the house, we conveyed him indoors.

"He then told us that as he was leaving the lavatory, he had heard footsteps outside, but taking it for granted that they were ours, he had opened the door.

"Standing immediately outside was a man with a revolver in each hand. He placed both against the prince's chest and discharged them simultaneously.

"'The report was so deafening,' said the unhappy victim, 'that for the first moment I thought that I was actually cut in two and I was hurled to the ground as if I had been struck by a thunderbolt. . . . I forgive the wretch, whoever he was, for those who hired him to take my life are the real criminals.'

"Then his thoughts reverting instantly to the dauphine, he added, 'Ah! my sister, you are really the cause of all these miserable doings, which are the inevitable results of your hopeless stubbornness.'

"Both pistols must have had a double charge, for two bullets were lodged in the left arm just above the level of the prince's heart, whilst the second charge had actually struck the region of the heart. Without a miraculous inter-

vention of Providence, that charge must have killed the prince on the spot. His coat, waistcoat and shirt were all burnt away, whilst his skin showed a large black patch, the size of a man's hand.

"Another bullet, apparently spent, fell out of his coat sleeve.

"I went at once to give notice to the police, who came immediately and made a most careful examination of the garden and all the premises, taking note of every detail."

After describing the prompt arrival of the doctors, M. Gruau goes on to say how one of the surgeons, who had gone home in search of certain instruments, was accosted by some one immediately outside the house.

The individual, who had stepped out from the crowd which had gathered round our door, kept his face hidden in the folds of his cloak, but, judging from his voice, he appeared to be greatly agitated.

"Is the prince dead?" he asked anxiously.

"No," was the reply, "but he is seriously wounded."

"Will he die?" inquired the stranger, following the doctor.

"I trust that the French prince is in no actual danger," answered the surgeon, whereupon the mysterious person instantly vanished.

"I don't doubt," adds Gruau, "that he was an accomplice of the assassin." As all the bullets were extracted without producing any bad symptoms in the prince's condition, there was every hope of his recovery.

Without actually accusing Désiré Roussel of the crime, I directed the attention of the police to him, as being at any rate a suspect. Thereupon the police inspector Walter assured me, that in the event of Roussel not having been able to get away from London, the wretch would probably return for his dinner on the morrow in order to disarm suspicion. In anticipation of this, he concealed several officers in the Camberwell house.

And on Saturday night, Roussel did make his appearance and was instantly arrested.

Pale as a corpse and shaking in every limb, he stammered out a few questions as to the reason of his arrest.

"You'll soon know," was the reply; whilst I added:

"A terrible crime has been committed since you were last at this house."

There was no difficulty in identifying Roussel as the would-be murderer, but in the end he escaped from the hangman, because the prince refused to give the evidence as to his identity, which was needed to convict him.

"It was not his fault," he maintained, "he was only a tool."

It was certainly a curious coincidence that Roussel should have set out for London at the very date that Louis XVII. had definitely declined to go to Switzerland.

Moreover, there was no doubt that in the foregoing August, Roussel had meditated an attack upon the prince.

For at that time, he called at the house in Clarence Place and asked to see the prince, representing himself as an old French soldier in great distress.

On that occasion Gruau had caused him to be dismissed without interviewing him himself or allowing the prince to do so.

But at the time of his arrest, the servant of the house recognised Roussel as the man who had called there three months previously.

Although poison, steel, and bullets had all failed to compass Louis XVII.'s end, his enemies, nothing daunted, made another attempt on his life.

For this new effort, they adopted a hitherto untried expedient.

As we have already said, the prince had a perfect genius for the invention of bombs and of all kinds of explosives, and in the new house at Camberwell he fitted up a laboratory for his own use, where he pursued his experiments and inventions with the greatest energy.

One day during his temporary absence from his scientific

labours, some villains got into his workshop and took the most skilful measures for ensuring an explosion.

The following account of the affair appeared in the *Sun*, June 15th, 1841 :—

"The prince, who had just returned from the city, was engaged in adjusting some machinery, when a fire suddenly broke out in one corner of his laboratory, where inflammable substances had evidently been introduced into a little heap of combustibles during his absence.

"In an instant the whole room was alight.

"Unfortunately the prince had left a little barrel near the window filled with some explosive material that he had made himself.

"Knowing that this must inevitably explode, he dashed through the flames to secure the barrel and throw it out of the window. But at that very moment it ignited, and a tremendous explosion followed immediately.

"The prince's face and hands were badly burnt, and he had to fight his way through the flames to the door. No sooner, however, was he out of danger than he suddenly remembered that he had left his most valuable invention in one corner of the blazing room.

"Seizing a bucket of water, he dashed back into the flames, fighting against them with the courage of a lion.

"His clothes caught fire, but at the cost of superhuman efforts, he succeeded in securing his precious machine. . . .

"The prince lost no time in notifying the disaster to the police, supplying them at the same time with certain information which will probably serve as a clue to the discovery of the miscreants who were guilty of this outrage.

"We understand that the police are making diligent researches, and as they already have certain suspects under observation, it is to be hoped that the culprits—who are believed to have attacked the unfortunate son of Louis XVI. on a former occasion—will not be suffered to escape from Justice."

Apparently, however, the malefactors did.

The laboratory was rebuilt, only to be burnt down again, and this time it was totally wrecked.

The *Morning Advertiser* of March 8th, 1842, gives the account of "A Fresh Disaster at Minerva House, the residence of the Duke of Normandy."

For a second time the indomitable Louis XVII. rebuilt his laboratory, and resumed his labours within its walls.

CHAPTER XI

Arrival of the Duc de Bordeaux in London—Refuses to interview M. Gruau—M. Gruau's public challenge to the legitimists—No one takes up the glove—Louis XVII. builds his third laboratory—He experiments publicly at Woolwich with his own inventions—English Government offers to buy the patent of one of his inventions—Refused by the prince—He offers the patent to the French Government—Offer falls through—Patent offered by Louis XVII. to Switzerland—Is invited to bring his inventions to that country—Difficulties as to passport—Travels to Holland in Colonel Butts' suite—Arrested at Rotterdam—Kept under Dutch police observation—Befriended by Van Buren—Louis XVII. finally decides to remain in Holland—Prospect of peace at eventide—Sudden illness—Partial recovery—Return of serious symptoms—Louis XVII. sends for his family—Last days of a martyr-king—Death of Louis XVII.—A phantom link between the dead king and the fortunes of France.

At the close of 1833, when the Duc de Bordeaux arrived in London to travel "en prince" in England, Louis XVII., using M. Gruau as his medium, made one last attempt to reunite himself with his family. On the 29th November of the previous year, he had written a pathetic letter to Henri V. beseeching him to come to London that they might spend some days together, and undertaking to furnish him with irrefutable proofs of his identity.

But no notice had been taken of that letter.

Nor was M. Gruau more blessed, when he tried to obtain an audience with the duke when he arrived in London.

Righteously indignant at his failure to secure a hearing, M. Gruau forthwith inserted in the *Sun* newspaper of December 6th, a practical challenge to all the so-called legitimists who were then in London, inviting them to institute a court of inquiry with the Duke of Bordeaux as their president for the purpose of settling the long vexed question of the survival of the dauphin.

This challenge was reproduced in the *Tyne Mercury;* it was also copied into the *Siècle* of December 9th, 1843.

The Duke de Bordeaux, however, and his satellites were far too cowardly to "take up the glove," and there the matter ended.

It is curious to note how history repeated itself in 1871, when in his turn Prince Louis Charles, the second son of Louis XVII., sought to obtain a personal interview with that same Duc de Bordeaux, who was at that time known as the Comte de Chambord.

Louis Charles was then at Breda, and on hearing that the Comte de Chambord had arrived at the Crown Hotel in that city, M. Gruau de la Barre, the ever faithful friend and legal adviser of the Bourbon family, promptly wrote to the comte, requesting an audience for his royal client.

No answer was returned to La Barre, but after receiving his appeal, "Henri V." left Breda without a moment's delay. He was literally put to flight by the suggestion of this interview, just as he had formerly fled from London when approached by Louis XVII. for the same object.

That this behaviour on the part of the Comte de Chambord rankled long and bitterly in the memory of Charles Louis de Bourbon, is evident from the conversation which took place between him and M. Maurevert, a report of which appeared in a number of the *Figaro* in 1895.

"As regards the Comte de Chambord," said Prince Louis Charles, "he was a good enough man, he knew the truth perfectly well about my father, but could not say it,"—"il ne pouvait pas la dire,"—"because in so doing, he would have inculpated Louis XVIII., Charles X. and the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

"But his life was one perpetual struggle with his conscience, and finally he came to a compromise with himself and his scruples.

"He might have been made king, but he would not

allow himself to be proclaimed, whilst tenaciously retaining his claims to the throne. The son of a bigamist, the Comte de Chambord was determined not to play the part of an usurper," added Prince Louis bitterly.

"Ah! in speaking of the Duc de Berri as a bigamist," broke in M. Maurevert, "you allude to his first marriage in England with Miss Amy Brown?"

"Exactly. You know that by this marriage he had a son and two daughters. The latter became respectively Madame de Charette and Madame de Lucinge-Faucigny."

"Then at that rate," cried M. Maurevert, "the son George Granvil Brown was your cousin, and had Louis XVII. really died in the Temple, he would have been the rightful heir to the throne instead of his younger half-brother, the Comte de Chambord?"

"Just so," was the answer; "he is not alive now, having died some years ago in great obscurity. The legitimists greatly dislike any reference to this marriage; but however much they may resent it, it was perfectly valid, and though it may have been annulled by Louis XVIII.—himself an usurper—it was never dissolved by the Holy See.

"But to return to my point, the son of the Duc de Berri, who had no legal right to his title, was perfectly well aware that Naundorf was Louis XVII. and that he had left legitimate heirs to the throne of France in my brothers and myself.

"Consequently Henri de Chambord had a double reason—namely, the knowledge of his own doubtful legitimacy and the certainty of Louis XVII.'s survival—for assuming the attitude which he adopted after the war of 1870 and which so greatly surprised and offended his most devoted adherents."

As regards the details of the Duc de Berri's marriage in England, we add this note, which we borrow from the *Extrait augmenté de la Question Louis XVII.*, by M. Delrosay.

"During his exile in England, the Duc de Berri con-

tracted a marriage with a young English girl, Amy Brown by name, a clergyman's daughter.

"She ultimately followed the Duc de Berri to France.

"The marriage took place in the Roman Catholic Chapel in King Street, Portman Square, in 1806.

"In April of the previous year, however, Miss Brown had already given birth to a son—George Granvil Brown—who was legitimatised, from the Roman Catholic point of view, by the subsequent marriage. Two daughters in succession were added later to the family, who were always considered by the Comte de Chambord to be his sisters.

"Every year these ladies paid an annual visit to their brother, George Granvil Brown, at Mantes, where he had a municipal post of some minor importance.

"He was universally respected by his fellow-townsmen, but was entirely devoid of any ambitious aspirations, although his personal resemblance to the Duc de Berri was most pronounced and striking. He died at Mantes, in 1882, only six years after his mother, who died in May 1876, aged ninety-three years.

"Her long life closed at the Château de La Contrie, the residence of her grandson, Baron Charette de la Contrie, the son of her daughter Charlotte-Marie.

"In her death certificate, 'which,' says M. Otto Friedrichs, 'I have seen with my own eyes, the old lady was described as the "widow of Charles-Ferdinand"; this was the Duc de Berri's name.'

"By order of Louis XVIII., her two daughters were not only naturalised as French subjects in 1830, but ten years before that date, they had both been raised to the peerage of France."

But after this long digression, it is time to return to Louis XVII.

In spite of all the rebuffs of fortune and the unkindness of man, he was devoting himself with more energy than ever to the development of his various inventions of bombs and other explosives.

The third laboratory had been built and fitted up, and the neighbours looked on with wonder and admiration at the French prince's pluck and perseverance.

Some of his inventions promised so well, that he was invited to experiment with them publicly at Woolwich, and various London and County papers published long and enthusiastic articles in their praise.

The name of the inventor was always given in these papers as Charles-Louis, Duke of Normandy.

At length the English Government offered to buy the patent of one of the duke's machines, but, actuated by a praiseworthy sense of honour, the exiled king felt compelled to refuse the tempting offer, on the grounds that in selling his invention to Great Britain, he might be putting weapons of destruction into the hands of a future enemy of his country.

His next step was to offer the fruits of his labours to France, whither M. Gruau de la Barre was despatched to discuss the matter with the Minister of War in Paris.

It being absolutely necessary, however, for the inventor himself to be on the spot to direct his experiments, and the French Government refusing to allow the exile to return for the purpose, this project fell through.

Louis XVII. next turned to Switzerland, and offered his inventions to the bravely independent little Republic whose Government had shown such consistent sympathy with the French royalists, very many of whom had found a kindly refuge in their distress amongst the good Helvetians.

The result of the correspondence between Louis XVII. and the Swiss Ministers was most promising.

The latter were quite ready to enter into negotiations with the prince for the purchase of his valuable patents, but stipulated that before going further, he should come to Switzerland and make his experiments in that country.

Now at last a gleam of coming prosperity shone out on the royal inventor, who seemed to have every prospect of

securing a substantial competency for the remainder of his life.

So he arranged to start for Switzerland towards the end of January 1845.

His enemies, however, saw fit to make yet another attempt on his life before he left England.[1]

On January 2nd, about eight o'clock in the evening, whilst Louis XVII. was engaged in his laboratory, a volley of bullets was fired through the window, by some one in the garden.

Mercifully they missed their aim.

The would-be assassins escaped and were never traced.

As in order to reach Switzerland it was necessary to pass through Holland, the prince applied to the Dutch Consul in London for a passport. This was given to him, made out in the name of Charles-Louis de Bourbon.

Almost immediately after receiving it, he was requested to return to the consul's office, it being necessary—so it was stated — to make a correction in the terms of the passport.

A good friend, however, gave a private hint to Louis XVII. that this was only a pretext for depriving him of the passport altogether, and assured him that if he once returned it, he would never see it again. Thus warned, the prince determined to ignore the request.

At the same time he thought it well to apply to a certain Colonel W. Butts, who was going to Holland at that time, for permission to travel as one of his suite, which would thus dispense him from the necessity of having a passport.

The Colonel gave a willing consent, allowing the prince to take with him his young assistant, Douglas Tucker by name.

So the whole party embarked together for Rotterdam.

But as might have been foreseen, the Dutch police had received information of Charles-Louis de Bourbon's move-

[1] See *Intrigues Dévoilées*, vol. iii. p. 10 and following.

ments and the instant that the boat touched Rotterdam, she was boarded by a police agent, demanding to see the passports of all the passengers.

A personal description of Louis XVII. had been furnished to the police, so that when he declared that he was one of Colonel Butts' servants, and therefore had no separate passport, the official promptly replied :

"Nonsense ! you're the master here, not the servant ; besides you *have* got a passport standing in the name of Charles-Louis de Bourbon."

Therewith Louis XVII. was taken into custody, but on reaching the hotel, he was allowed to engage a room there on condition that he would not attempt to leave Rotterdam without permission. A gendarme was moreover stationed at the door of the hotel.

Well used to adversity, the royal prisoner preserved his usual equanimity, nay, he even managed to see the humour of the situation, as the following letter written to Gruau will show.

It was dated from Rotterdam, January 28th, 1845.

"You know that I made the journey incog., posing as one of Colonel Butts' servants," he writes, "nevertheless the Dutch police inspector found me out.

"'You, Sir,' he said, 'are the master, not the servant. Be good enough to show me your passport, and then no one will interfere with your liberty in this country.'

"Whereupon I replied, 'As you seem to know so much about me, Sir, perhaps you'll tell me who I am.'

"'Why, you are the Duke of Normandy,' was the reply, 'although on your passport you are only described as Charles-Louis de Bourbon.'

"'All right,' I said, 'as you are so well informed about me, perhaps you will be so good as to ask your Chief to keep my secret till further orders.'

"'As you please, Sire,' answered the inspector.

"So we parted quite amicably, and I thereupon flung myself into the hospitable belly of this whale of St. Nicholas,

not getting through the windows, however, but entering quite decently by the door. That door has been guarded by a policeman day and night ever since. I was not aware of his presence, however, till one of the hotel servants informed me of it next morning.

"Being made aware of it, I promptly dressed myself and, going downstairs, I glided behind this officer of the law and tapping him on the shoulder I ordered him to follow me.

"The good fellow was so taken aback that he did so without a word. I then walked him all over the town till I had thoroughly tired him out, when I returned to the shelter of my sacred whale, parting with my guardian angel at the door. By the way, he looked at me so hungrily, just like a dog expecting a bone, that I really must try and give him something before I've done.

"In any case, my dear friend, hold yourself in readiness to join me the instant that I may call you.

"Meanwhile tell Mary Percival what has befallen me and tell her also that I commend my family to the care of hers.[1]

"And above all things don't distress yourselves about me for you may be quite happy on my account. Whatever happens to me only increases my trust in God, Whose protection is all-powerful.

"Write to me as soon as possible, dear friend, and give me all the news you can of every one and everything I love."

Happily for Louis XVII., he found an able champion in the celebrated Dutch lawyer, Van Buren, to whom he confided the secret of his birth and explained the trying position in which he was then placed. He also told him of his dealings with the Swiss Government.

Greatly impressed by the stranger's quiet dignity and proud bearing, Van Buren never doubted the truth of his

[1] Mary Percival was the daughter of an English clergyman, the Hon. and Rev. C. G. Percival, Rector of Calverton, Bucks, who translated and edited *The Abridgement of the History of the Misfortunes of the Dauphin*. The Percival family showed great kindness to the despised royal family during their stay in England. (*Correspondance Intime et Inédite de Louis XVII.*, vol. ii. p. 585.)

story and embraced his cause from the first with the keenest interest.

Moreover, after hearing about his negotiations with Switzerland, he was shrewd enough to reflect that his own Government might possibly enter into similar relations with this gifted inventor to Holland's distinct advantage. So Van Buren was indefatigable in his efforts to obtain the restitution of his client's liberty.

After a considerable time had elapsed, he did succeed in this, and Louis XVII. was relieved of his "guardian angel," but the authorities refused to restore his passport unless he undertook to return to London, a condition with which it was impossible to comply.

Meanwhile the interruption to his journey and the enforced stay in Holland was causing grave annoyance to the prince.

Having signed a contract with the Swiss Government, pledging himself to deliver certain of his inventions for the sum of £5000, he was naturally most anxious to fulfil his engagement. But it was quite clear that his persecutors never meant to lose sight of him, and that not only in Holland, where he had been so unlawfully deprived of his passport, but that in other countries as well he could expect neither the protection nor the justice which was extended to every one else as their proper and undisputed right.

Fully determined to assert his own rights and to expose the annoying treatment to which he was a victim, Louis XVII. sent for Gruau de la Barre, that he might assist Van Buren in his legal proceedings.

"The prince," says Gruau, "when referring to his enemies' tactics, made a very cogent remark.

"'If ever I do avail myself of my rightful titles,' he said, 'they are instantly called into question; yet now that, being anxious to do nothing that may irritate diplomatic susceptibilities, I wish to preserve my incognito, they force me to call myself the Duc de Normandie, in order that they may

have an excuse for persecuting me, by depriving me of the means of earning my bread. Consequently I am debarred from making any provision for my family for the future.

"'Surely my fate is too miserable!'"[1]

No wonder that at the eleventh hour, after the heat and burden of a lifetime of persecution, the royal outcast bursts out at last into this exceeding bitter cry!

"A man I am, crossed with adversity!" might well have been his motto. But though Louis XVII. had to suffer much from the "law's delay" Van Buren proved a priceless friend.

So persistently did he work to bring his client's inventions under the notice of the military authorities in Holland —travelling with the prince to Antwerp in order to introduce him to the Governor of the Military College at Breda—that finally the Dutch Government, anxious to retain such a genius in their own country, made an offer to Louis XVII. for the purchase of one of his machines.

So advantageous were their terms, that in the end the prince not only accepted them, but finally resolved to settle permanently in Holland, there to reap the benefits of his toil without roaming any further afield.

Evidently fearful of offending the French sovereign, the Dutch Minister stipulated that in the contract to be drawn up respecting the agreement between Louis XVII. and the Dutch Government, he should be content to describe himself simply as "Charles-Louis," omitting all other names and titles.

And so on June 30th, 1835, by an express order of King William II., a formal compact was signed and sealed, setting forth an act of agreement between the Minister of War and Charles-Louis, whereby the latter bound himself to deliver one of his "pyrotechnical inventions" for the service of the Dutch State.

After this Louis XVII. chose the little town of Delft as his residence, and returned to the prosecution of his scientific labours with more ardour than ever.

[1] See *Intrigues Dévoilées*, vol. iii. Part II. p. 1017.

In Delft he was always addressed as Charles-Louis, Duc de Normandie, and was treated with the greatest respect by every one.

Indeed, no one could help admiring his extraordinary intelligence and the indefatigable industry, which even the merciless vicissitudes of his harassed life could not succeed in quenching.

And here we cannot resist quoting an extract from Van Buren's diary in which he records his impressions on visiting Louis XVII. in his laboratory.[1]

"There he stood before us, every inch a king, yet with never an acre of ground to call his own, with scarcely indeed a gold piece at his disposal.

"Yet as we watched him manipulating in turn, wood, iron, copper, all the materials, in short, that he needed for the confection of his marvellous bombs, he seemed like a demi-god of old, posing as a modern Vulcan.

"Only to watch him at his work, was to feel convinced that here was no pretender, no false Dauphin, no Hervagault, no Richemont!

"All unworthy suspicions, all doubts as to his identity vanished into air as we stood in the presence of this remarkable man."

For the first time in his tormented existence, Louis XVII. had apparently found a promised land, where he might make his home under the protection of the sovereign of the country. Here at last was a haven where he might cast anchor and look forward to an eventide of peace and even prosperity.

It was towards the end of June—just as he was making arrangements for his family to join him at Delft—that matters of business obliged him to go to the Hague.

Having concluded these, Louis XVII. was strolling along the shore at Scheveningen, when he was suddenly and most unaccountably seized with frightful internal agony.

At the end of some hours, the violent pain yielded some-

[1] See *Correspondance Intime et Inédite de Louis XVII.*, vol ii. p. 588.

what to remedies, and he was able to return to Rotterdam, where he was making a temporary stay.

On reaching his hotel, however, he was obliged to go to bed at once, very high fever having set in.

For a whole week, Louis XVII. lay in a most precarious condition, causing great anxiety to his doctors, who were at a loss—*so they maintained*—to discover the cause of this strange attack.

At the first symptom of improvement, their royal patient insisted on leaving his bed, and with his indomitable courage struggled back to Delft.

His heart was set on completing a new kind of grenade on which he was at work. For some time he appeared fairly convalescent and resumed his usual habits.

Towards the end of July, however, he was again seized with the same alarming symptoms with which his illness had begun, and feeling convinced now that his end was near, Louis XVII. despatched Gruau in all haste to England, to bring his family as soon as might be.

On the 4th of August they reached Delft.[1]

"The prince," says the faithful Gruau, "had reckoned very accurately the time at which we ought to arrive, and as the hour approached he became happily eager and impatient, repeatedly asking the doctors what o'clock it was.

"It was about six in the evening when we reached Delft, but at the very moment of our arrival, the dear prince took such a sudden turn for the worse, that we could not tell whether he was able to recognise either his wife or his eldest daughter—the only members of his family who were admitted to his room that night. From that evening, delirium set in, and he never regained consciousness.

"I cannot trust myself to write the details of the six days which followed.

"Though a distance of five-and-twenty years lies between me and that terrible time, I still feel all its horror, all its sadness so vividly!

[1] See *Le Roi Légitime*, vol. ii. pp. 329–331.

"My eyes still see the darkened chamber, where the dying prince lay in his last agony, my ears still carry the sound of his pathetic voice, as he spoke continuously, all unconscious of the weeping family who surrounded him, and the few Dutch officers who came to show their sympathy and respect for the moribund son of Louis XVI.

"No, I cannot, I dare not dwell on those memories because the anguish of those far-away August days has lost none of its poignancy, none of its sting; nor ever can, whilst the long series of crimes which darkened the whole life of Louis XVII., and culminated in his cruel death, remain unredeemed by the restitution of their rights to his descendants!

"Nor can I describe our agonised alternations between hope and despair, as the hours dragged on, during which we watched the painful consummation of the sacrifice.

"Throughout the persecution which had held him all his life, 'nailed to the cross of sorrow,' the prince had always been remarkable for his extraordinary self-control, for the power of commanding his feelings, and for the calm dignity with which he bore himself under the most distressing conditions.

"In the days of his helpless delirium, however, when the once strong will could no longer act as the warder to his feelings, all the barriers of conscious reticence were swept away, the floodgates of the tortured soul were flung wide, and the pent-up griefs of half a century broke bounds at last.

"It was as though all the unshed tears of a lifetime gushed forth now in one surging torrent.

"In the plaintive tones of his wandering speech," goes on Gruau, "we realised what exceeding bitterness must have secretly filled his soul, for as he lay tossing in the wild delirium which never left him, all the sorrows and trials of his life were evidently presented to his mental view in one vast panorama of woe.

"Sometimes he was convulsed with sobs, at others, the

great tears rolled slowly down his face, silent witnesses to the wounds which had pierced his heart so continuously!

"Now and again, in short disjointed sentences, he would reveal how keenly he had felt the pangs of loneliness and desertion, or he would groan aloud over the bitter sufferings which his enemies had inflicted upon him, and over all the woes which were reserved for his unhappy country.

"Often he would weep at the thought of leaving his wife and children, and with no one to protect them.

"'My poor, poor children!' he would sob, 'they will soon be fatherless, and what a gloomy life lies before them!'

"Then in a heart-rending voice he would cry:

"'But I am going to my Heavenly Father, Who will know me for what I am! Oh! my God, deal mercifully with me! Ever since they cut off my father's head, my life has been shrouded in darkness!'

"Whenever his eye fell on his eldest daughter, who was so strikingly like the dauphine, he used to fancy that the heartless sister, whom *he* had always loved so well, was beside him.

"'Ah!' he would exclaim, 'it is with *her* that I have to reckon: it has been her fault, only *her* fault!'

"Then with heart-piercing pathos, he would add:

"'But I could never make others believe that I meant them no harm, that I only wanted to help them.' Again, he would exclaim at intervals, 'Ah! Edward, my son, what misery is in store for France!'

"God," cries M. Gruau, "God only knows the anguish that we suffered as we listened to those broken utterances, repeated over and over again through the slow, sad hours of that unforgotten time. To those who for six long days and nights watched unceasingly beside that distressing death-bed, it seemed as though all the past tortures of mind and body, all the aching heart-sickness of hope deferred, had culminated in one overwhelming soul-storm, which swept over the last hours of our royal martyr!

"There are some forms of suffering which must be experienced to be in any way understood, and no one but those who knelt beside Louis XVII. in his mortal agony will ever realise the sorrow of those moments.

"It was at two o'clock in the afternoon, on the 10th of August 1845, on the fifty-third anniversary of that blood-stained August day, which marked the beginning of the downfall of the royal line of France, that the son of Louis XVI. ceased to suffer."[1]

As we read this last line of M. Gruau's pathetic record, we can only rejoice at the thought of the release which came at length to the tortured spirit.

Surely the king had come to his own at last!

For Louis XVII. it might truly be said, that "Life had been the jailer, Death the angel sent to draw the unwilling bolts!"

Ay, surely! since for him, "life had been but night, so death would bring the sunrise," for had he not learnt, dear saint, to turn his manifold sorrows into that "shining ladder whose golden rounds are our calamities," whereon with firmly planted feet "the spirit climbs to God."

But that death should have overtaken Louis XVII. at the very moment when in his case, the promise of light at eventide seemed on the point of fulfilment, that the marvellously strong constitution, which had resisted so many assaults upon his life, so many years of imprisonment with all their attendant hardships, should have succumbed at last to this apparently unaccountable illness, is one of the

[1] Those who desire fuller details of the illness, death, and obsequies of Louis XVII. should read M. Otto Friedrichs' most interesting pamphlet, entitled *La Maladie, le décès et les obsèques de Louis XVII. à Delft*, 1845. Here they will find reference made to the scar left by the rabbit bite, to which we have already alluded.

Further evidence as to the peculiar marks occurring on the person of Louis XVII., which were known to be present on the face and limbs of the dauphin, Duc de Normandie, is supplied in the report upon the corpse of Louis XVII., deceased at Delft, August 10, 1845. A copy of this "Acte de l'Examen du cadavre de Charles-Louis de Bourbon, Duc de Normandie," was supplied to the council for the Naundorf claims by F. Abraham Johannes Terlaabe, Notary, residing at The Hague, January 8th, 1904. Signed: A. T. Terlaabe.

mysterious dispensations of Providence which baffle our finite comprehension.

That Louis XVII. died of the effects of poison, all his doctors were agreed, though how given, and by whom, no suggestion, strangely enough, has ever been offered.[1]

(The dread of poison was evidently very present to Louis XVII.'s mind ever after his friend Pezold's tragic end.

Writing from Paris to his wife, in 1833,[2] just after the box of candied fruits had been sent to him anonymously, he strictly forbids her to allow the children to accept any eatables of any sort, either fruits or bonbons, from anybody. They were not even to accept clothes, "since," adds the anxious father, "even clothes can easily convey poison.")

When they bore Louis XVII. to the only spot on earth which really proved a place of rest to him, his coffin was reverently carried by soldiers and escorted by fifteen officers of high rank, whilst the whole population of Delft followed in respectful sympathy.

At the close of the funeral rites, M. van Buren uttered an almost passionate protest against the ruthless persecution which had converted Louis XVII.'s life into one protracted martyrdom.

One brief passage which we extract from his brilliant speech appears to us the most fitting sentence with which to close this chapter.

"Do you ask," cried M. van Buren, "do you ask if this coffin does indeed contain the mortal remains of a king's son?

"*Let his life and his death give the answer to that question!*"

. . . . . .

Rather more than twenty-five years later, a curious coincidence occurred which forged—if we may use the expression—a phantom link between the departed Louis XVII. and the

[1] See *Le Carnet*, November 1903, p. 209.

[2] *Correspondance Intime et Inédite de Louis XVII.*, vol. i. p. 198.

fortunes of that country, who in so obstinately refusing to recognise him, had likewise refused to know the things that belonged to her peace.

In 1840, Louis XVII. made a present of one of his rings to Jules Favre : it was a signet ring made of a very fine intaglio representing Bellona in act to hurl a javelin from her hand.

Jules Favre, who was very fond of this ring, always wore it.

Thus it came to pass that when on January 28th, 1871, at the close of the disastrous Franco-Prussian war, Jules Favre, in his capacity of Minister for Foreign Affairs, had to meet Bismarck for the signing of the treaty at Versailles, he found on arriving at the Palace that he had forgotten to bring the seal of the French Republic. Whereupon Bismarck begged him to seal the Convention with the ring that he was wearing, *the ring which had once been Louis XVII.'s !*

That the ring of the martyr-king should have thus set the seal upon the humiliating articles of peace, seems almost like a flash of posthumous revenge on the part of one who had suffered so cruelly and so unjustly at the hands of his country !

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

Tomb of Louis XVII.—Inscription on tombstone of the Princess Amélie de Bourbon—M. Boissy d'Anglas' statement—Attitude of England and Holland towards Louis XVII.—Prince Adelberth de Bourbon's nationality—Suppression of the name of Naundorf—Prince Henry of Holland's declaration—The Comte de Chambord's attitude towards the French Crown—M. Rochow's prognostication anent Louis XVII.—The private clause in the Treaty of Paris—Louis XVII.'s documents retained by Prussia—The political aspect of Louis XVII.'s cause—The party of the "Survivance"—The family of the Restoration dogged by misfortune—Outlook for the future.

HERE LIES

LOUIS XVII.

CHARLES-LOUIS, DUC DE NORMANDIE,

KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE,

BORN AT VERSAILLES, MARCH 27TH, 1785,

DIED AT DELFT, AUGUST 10TH, 1845.

THIS inscription, which may still be read by any visitor to the cemetery of Delft, was erected by M. van Buren acting for the family and with the full sanction of the Dutch Government.

Had not William II. of Holland felt fully justified in allowing the erection of this stone, he would never have offered what would otherwise have been a grave insult to the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

It is very strange that she should never have entered any protest against it.

Furthermore, when Madame Amélie de Bourbon died at Messac in the Department of Ille et Vilaine, 1891, the inscrip-

GRAVE OF LOUIS XVII. IN THE CEMETERY OF DELFT

tion placed on her tombstone in the cemetery of Messac ran as follows :—

MADAME AMÉLIE DE BOURBON,

GRAND-DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XVI.

DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XVII.

yet the Republican Government has never interfered with that inscription, knowing full well that it is a true one.

In the official report made by M. Boissy d'Anglas, Senator, in the name of Petitioners—March 1910—and entrusted with the examination of the Petition of M. Charles-Louis de Bourbon, he says :

"As regards that mysterious person, Louis XVII., there are certain obscure points in his history which may still take some time to clear up, but the facts upon which our belief in him is founded are absolutely proved and fully suffice to establish his identity, which is now acknowledged throughout Europe, if not throughout France.

"In the matter of the present claimants, it being my duty to prove that their father was French, I must necessarily prove that he was Louis XVII.

"Amongst other proofs, I cite the example set by both England and Holland in this respect.

"Both these countries recognised the so-called Naundorf as Louis XVII.

"In all the legal documents certifying the birth of Louis' children, &c., signed at different intervals during the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, Louis XVII. is always described as Charles-Louis, Duke of Normandy, and his sons are referred to as the 'Princes of France.'

"In Holland he was described in his death certificate as the son of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, and further designated as Louis XVII."

It is clear, however, that Louis-Philippe pursued the dead Louis XVII. with an attempt to deprive him, even

in his grave, of the enjoyment of his titles, as recognised by the Dutch Government.

We possess the following extract on this point in M. Gruau de la Barre's own handwriting.

"In the February of 1859, I made a journey to the Hague, accompanied by M. G. M. Van de Horst, the son-in-law of Madame de Bourbon.[1]

"One evening we were entertained at the house of M. Hoegwater, one of the 'Etats-Generaux,' and this is what he stated to us :

"'Shortly after the death of the Duc de Normandie (1845), a French ambassador was sent by the Government of France to interview M. M——, one of the leading lawyers at the Hague at that time.'"

(It was probably M. Metman, who about 1845, was the greatest ornament of the legal profession at the Hague.)

"'The ambassador's errand was to instigate the lawyer to present a petition urging that the terms of the certificate setting forth the death of Louis XVII. should be revised and the royal qualifications with which it invested the name of the deceased should be removed.

"'This individual was reinforced with the death certificate which had been drawn up and signed in the Temple in 1795, and which purported to establish the death of the Dauphin within the Tower at that date.

"'The Dutch lawyer, however, refused to be a party to any such proceeding, assuring his visitor that no single Tribunal throughout Holland would entertain such a proposal for a minute.

"'"It would be quite a different matter," he declared, "if you could produce any really convincing evidence to prove that Naundorf was not the son of Louis XVI. If you will undertake to supply me with that, I might give the matter my consideration."'

"Thereupon, the French emissary withdrew, and the death certificate has remained intact ever since!

[1] M. Van de Horst married Marie-Antoinette, second daughter of Louis XVII.

"But in taking this step, the French Government only succeeded in confirming the validity of the claims which they sought to annul."[1]

Nor was this the only attempt which Louis-Philippe made with a view to obliterating all traces of the memory of Louis XVII.

In an interesting article, contributed by M. Georges Maurevert to the *Figaro* of June 12th, 1895, we find the following passage:

"After leaving the cemetery at Delft, whither Prince Louis-Charles de Bourbon had accompanied me, we took the tram to the Hague, where he was then living with his widowed sister, Princess Marie-Thérèse, to whom the prince wished to introduce me.

". . . During the déjeûner, at which I was entertained by the last surviving children of Naundorf-Louis XVII., the princess, amongst various other interesting communications, made the following statement:

"'One of the most vivid recollections of my girlhood,' she said, 'is associated with a certain occasion.

"'Some little time after my father's death, and whilst we were still living at Delft, two strangers came to call at our house and inquired if they could see the Duchess of Normandy.

"'(That was the title, you know, by which my mother was always known at that time, and indeed till the day of her death in 1888.)

"'Before receiving her visitors, my mother despatched La Barre to inquire their business.

"'When our deputy-father (*vice-père*), as we used to call him, returned with their answer, my mother proceeded to summon all us children round her.

"'We were then eight in number, my sister Bertha being already dead.

"'When we were all together in the room, my mother begged M. de la Barre to introduce the visitors. They entered

[1] See *La Question Louis XVII.*, p. 174.

her presence accordingly, and I perfectly remember the appearance of the elder man of the two.

"'He was quite elderly, with long white hair, which fell over his collar. He it was who led the conversation.

"'As he glanced at our eight faces, all representing more or less the type of the Loraine and Bourbon houses, he was visibly startled, and I heard him mutter, "One could believe that one was at Court."

"'He had been sent, so he informed my mother, by Louis-Philippe to propose to her that the remains of the "ex-watchmaker of Crossen" should be secretly exhumed from their present resting-place and conveyed in the strictest privacy to Saint-Denis, and there re-interred.

"'My mother listened to this suggestion in the most profound silence: the proposal, be it said, was made with great hesitation and with evident embarrassment on the part of the speaker.

"'Then after a moment's pause, my mother rose to her feet, her face deathly pale.

"'"Gentlemen!" she cried, "let me tell you, that if you wish to carry back the ashes of the King Louis XVII. to France, you will only do so with a regiment of soldiers escorting His Majesty's coffin. Such an escort, his Majesty King William II. of Holland will certainly provide!"'

"As Princess Marie-Thérèse concluded the story," goes on M. Maurevert, "she rose involuntarily, flinging out her arms as she spoke, her eyes flashing, her own face bloodless to the very lips.

"A minute later came the reaction, and she sank back on her chair sobbing passionately."[1]

In 1869 the Parliament of the Netherlands applied to the English Government for information with respect to the nationality of Adelberth, the youngest son of Louis XVII., who had been born at Camberwell.

Having been born on English soil, they now asked if, according to the English laws of that date, he was bound to consider himself a subject of Great Britain.

[1] See *La Question Louis XVII.*, pp. 165–170.

The English Government answered "No, seeing that his father, having been exiled from France, had not been at liberty to select his son's birthplace."[1]

Adelberth de Bourbon was then naturalised as a Dutchman and thus enabled to enter the Dutch army.

Further, the Court of Maestricht granted letters patent to every member of the Naundorf family authorising them to change their name to De Bourbon.

And yet more, the Court at Bois-le-duc, Holland, has now formally declared that it being matter of history that the members of the De Bourbon family are duly descended from Louis XVII., the name of Naundorf shall henceforward be entirely suppressed.

The following extract from M. Otto Friedrichs' contribution to the *Rapport, fait au nom de la Troisième Commission* (March 1910) proves that the Bourbon case has its warm supporters in Holland at this moment.

"When the play *Sire* was being given at the Théâtre-Français at Brussels, a certain person—who shall be nameless—remarked to Prince Henry:

"'Surely, Monseigneur, there is nobody left in Holland nowadays who still believes in the Naundorf myth?'

"Whereupon the prince replied very promptly:

"'Pray undeceive yourself on that point, Monsieur, for I can assure you that a very large number of us in Holland believe firmly in the truth of Louis XVII.'s story, and consider that his descendants' claims are absolutely well founded.'"

It is curious in connection with Holland to find the Grand-duke Vladimir of Russia also acknowledging—indirectly—his own belief in the "Naundorf myth."

For M. Otto Friedrichs declares, that more than once the Russian Grand-duke has assured him in alluding to his uncle, Carl Alexander—the Grand-duke Regent of Saxe-Weimar—that:

"He was more convinced even than I am of Naundorf's identity with Louis XVII."

[1] See *Rapport fait au nom de III. Commission*, p. 248.

Carl Alexander never made any secret of his firm conviction on this point, and constantly called Prince Adelberth de Bourbon "cousin" in the presence of numerous witnesses at the Hague.

There is little doubt that the fact of Louis XVII.'s survival from the Temple is perfectly well known to the members of the younger branch of the House of Bourbon of to-day.

Monsieur Boissy d'Anglas, in his introductory remarks in the schedule of the "Rapport" already quoted, says:

"There is no doubt that the Duc de Chambord, like his father the Duc de Berri, knew the terrible secret of the existence of the descendants of Louis XVII., and knew consequently that he was only a cadet of the royal House of Bourbon.

"But feeling that the revelation of the truth would cast lasting infamy upon the memory of his uncle Louis XVIII., his grandfather Charles X., and his aunt the Duchesse d'Angoulême, he shrank from acknowledging the truth."

On the other hand, the Duc de Chambord shrank equally from entertaining any offer respecting the crown of France.

When M. Chesnelong, acting as deputy for the royalist party, actually knelt before him, bathed in tears, to entreat him to return to France, the Comte de Chambord, himself greatly agitated, cut M. Chesnelong's supplications short.

"My dear friend," he said, "I have another strong reason for persisting in my refusal. But it is a reason which I cannot give you."

(M. Chesnelong himself quoted this answer of the prince in a communication to *Le Correspondant.*)

Later on, towards quite the end of his life, the Comte de Chambord always gave the same answer to those who asked him what should be done after his death.

"Your duty," he replied.

"But who will reign?"

"*He who has the right to reign,*" was the invariable answer.

What could have been the comte's mysterious reason which he could not state?

What did he mean by his Delphic utterance, "He who has the right to reign?"

And now it surely will not be out of place to conclude our thesis with an extract from M. Provins' able article in the *Carnet* for November 1903.

"As time goes on," he says, "it only favours our cause. I am well aware that M. Rochow, the Prussian Minister, assured M. Xavier Laprade, that Naundorf would *never* be recognised as Louis XVII., *because* his acknowledgment as such would bring shame on all the European Courts; but that statement was made in 1836, when the majority of those who had taken part in the coalition of 1814 and 1815 were still alive.

"Perhaps M. Rochow never knew or forgot the secret clause which Anquetil declares was inserted in the Treaty of Paris, stipulating that the Crown of France should be restored to the Duke of Normandy, *in the event of his ever being found!*

"Perhaps also the Prussian Minister forgot that the chief factors in the cruel ostracism inflicted upon Louis XVII. were, besides the immediate members of his own family, the French people themselves as represented by the Ministers of the Restoration.

"As regards Prussia's share in the matter, after all is said and done, she only took advantage of the trump cards she held in her hand.

"Clearly the largest number of documents relating to Louis XVII. are to be found in the secret archives of Prussia, or perhaps amongst the private papers of Prince Hardenberg.

"These undoubtedly represent communications, not only dealing directly with Naundorf's relations to the Prussian authorities, but also between that Government and the French Government. For we possess clear indications that such communications did take place, during the period that Charles X. and the Duchesse d'Angoulême were at Prague.

"Possibly," continues M. Provins, "the Emperor of Germany, with his characteristic generosity and love of justice, may one day be moved to lift the bann under which

the descendants of Louis XVII. are now lying, by allowing them free access to their ancestors' papers!

"*Many important documents are still hidden in France.*

"For both Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois had many confidential tools during the period of their exile from France, and many 'creatures' during their respective reigns, willing to serve their purposes.

"Perhaps the offspring of these *émigrés* may yet remember that the children of those illustrious builders of our nation are still alive, and perhaps, at no very distant time, they may cease to deprive them of the right to bear the name, to which France owes so much of her greatness and lustre.

"Some day the light will certainly dawn!

"So much for the historical side of the question of Louis XVII.'s survival.

"But what as regards its political aspect?

"Humanly speaking, the cause of Louis XVII.'s descendants—though of late years it has gained many supporters—is lost!

"But God is over all!

"And—though slowly and with much difficulty—a party *has* formed itself amongst us, its object being to maintain the fact of the 'Survivance,' and its tenets are attracting the attention and enlisting the interest of many deep thinkers throughout France. Moreover, the singular succession of misfortunes which have pursued the family of the Restoration, both collectively and also in many instances individually, cannot fail to inspire certain reflections and to 'give us pause.'

"In the expulsion of the Bourbons from France, from Spain, from Naples, from Parma, in short from nearly all the Italian principalities, may we not trace the just reward which they have drawn on their own heads by their heartless and criminal rejection of the rightful head of their House?[1]

[1] In their present distress, we cannot forget how closely the house of Braganza is allied with the Bourbon family.

"And again, the successive failures of all our forms of Government during the last century, the downfall of the majority of the institutions founded by the Revolution, the contempt which has overtaken the vaunted Gospel of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—all these are sources of perennial national disappointment and mortification.

"Under these conditions, however, the 'Survivance' has gained ground.

"Hundreds, I should say thousands, of priests never enter a church without asking God on their knees, why He permitted the success of Louis XVII.'s evasion from the Temple, if it were only to result in the permanent rejection and continuous suffering of his descendants.

"And we know that their prayers and intercessions on behalf of these unhappy princes are offered incessantly before the Throne of Grace.

"So let us look upwards and take courage!

"Nothing is permanent, nothing is durable that has been founded on violence and fraud, for the moral laws of right and wrong are not to be over-ridden in the long run by political expediency.

"In the end, right will always triumph over all coalitions, all conspiracies!

"All we need," winds up M. Provins, "is patience! And 'Patience c'est la suprême science!'"

Did not one of his compatriots in old time go still further than M. Provins and declare that—

"PATIENCE PASSE SCIENCE!"

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